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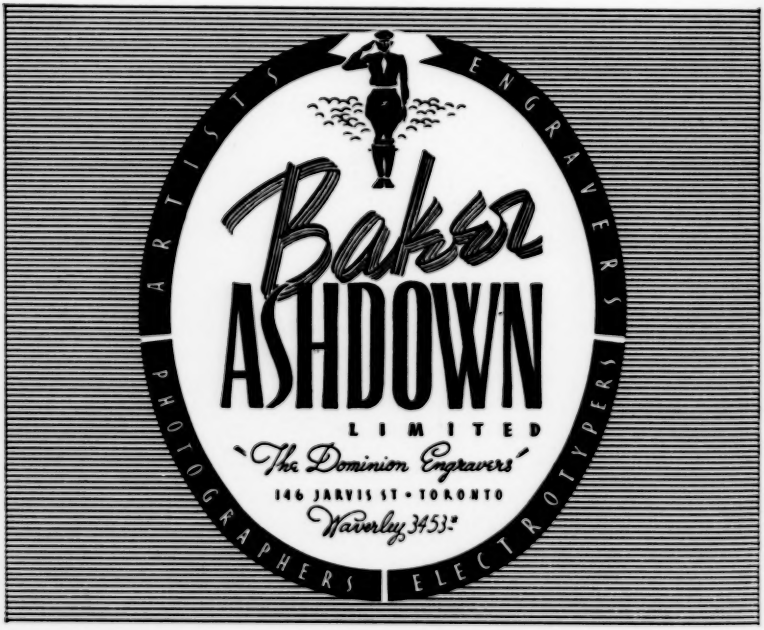

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PAN-GERMANISM ONCE MORE

ROLAND G. USHER

THE Second World War is already in its fifth month. There has never been a great European war in which the moral issue was clearer, more sharply defined. The régime in Germany has been guilty of acts of oppression, brutality, and intolerance without parallel since the Middle Ages. The Christian Church, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, has been openly assailed. Christianity itself has been attacked; the Bible denounced as Jewish; Wotan and the cult of the German blood substituted for Christian worship. Freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of investigation in the social sciences have been brought practically to an end. This new "culture" and "civilization" are now to be extended to Europe and then to the world at large. The attempt to conquer Europe has already made progress: Austria, the Sudeten, Bohemia and Moravia, half of Poland have been annexed to the Third Reich. To all of these the blessings of intolerance, of Fascism, and of the goose step are being transferred. The Second World War is being fought to bring this régime to an end and to restore in Europe the reign of peace, of law, of liberty, and of democracy. The moral aims of the war are crystal clear.

Certainly, as one looks back twenty-five years, it must be admitted that the Kaiser's régime was less openly and less directly an attack upon democracy and civilization than Hitler's. Concentration camps for Jews, liberals, and civilians were not in use. Religious toleration was a practical fact. Christianity was observed and cherished, and no serious conflict existed between the state and either the Lutheran or Roman Catholic Churches. While the racial unity of all Germans was openly proclaimed as desirable and the purity and superiority of German blood were alleged, no cult of Wotan was thought of nor were temples erected to the German blood. A constitutional régime governed the country and while the ministries were not legally responsible either for policy or for the budget to the Reichstag, they did in practice resign when defeated. The Reichstag was no party congress assembled to vote "aye" to anything submitted to it and did not hesitate to oppose and denounce the ministerial policies. The worst feature of the old Pan-Germanism was not its domestic régime nor its domestic

policies, either in theory or in practice. Its worst feature was its oppressive and far-reaching foreign policy. The Second World War finds in Germany a régime hostile to the future of progress in the world on both counts. Its repressive domestic policy is, if anything, worse than its aggressive foreign policy.

But are the two wars related? Has the first Pan-Germanism given birth to a second? Or is the resemblance purely superficial and casual? Historians are charged with drawing parallels and comparisons between unrelated events, of looking for causes which are not there, and of discovering relationships too subtle for other than historically trained minds to see. They have probably overdone the matter more than once and no doubt will again. One like myself who declared a certain interpretation of German history true before and during the First World War finds himself tempted to continue the same line of thought as that of least resistance and must continually beware of forcing present facts into old moulds and of interpreting modern history too much on the basis of the idea that history repeats itself. In a literal sense, history has never repeated itself: the differences are always numerous and striking. In another sense, history frequently repeats itself because man as a thinking animal thinks slowly and ineffectually and seems almost incapable of new thoughts and devices. Nevertheless, I do feel that history has much to tell us about this present war.

If I am not too academic, I must insist that one of history's greatest lessons teaches us that a war must not be fought upon a wrong analysis of the situation. The causes must be correctly grasped to make intelligible the issues of the war, and the issues must be crystal clear or no solution of them at the end will be found. In other words, unless the Allies see clearly and truly what is the problem to be solved, there will be no victory. To be explicit, this war is fought to get rid of Hitler and his group. Unless they are themselves the true cause of the war, its *only* cause, the war will be lost and victory sacrificed if the war ends and merely removes *them*. The cause will not have been removed; the disease will not have been cured. *Unless they were the chief or sole cause!* But if they should not be! If other forces should be important and not realized, the result is serious if not catastrophic. The true analysis of a situation has meaning for the statesman as well as for a mere professional historian. A statesman must not make mistakes in policy, but not so many people realize that policy

is often based on history and that it was his history and not what they call his policy which was really at fault.

In utter seriousness, therefore, it is vital to determine whether or not the present war has relation to the war that preceded it; to the Pan-Germanism of twenty-five years ago; and if so, what relation. In 1914, the Kaiser, the militarists, the Junkers were denounced as the cause of the war; it was fought to remove them; it succeeded and sent the Kaiser into exile, the generals and nobles into retirement. Yet something was wrong, for the victory did not remain a victory. The armistice was an armistice only: a second world war is now being fought. I submit that the analysis of the First World War was at fault. Had the sole cause of the problem in Germany been the Kaiser and the militarists, with their power and influence, their removal should have settled the problem and have produced a lasting peace. Inasmuch as patently the problem was not solved, the issue arises what was the problem then, what is the problem now. Apparently the same analysis is being repeated: Hitler and his group are now declared to be the true difficulty; once they are removed, it will be solved. *This will be true only if the analysis is correct.* But is it correct? Have we any facts or probable facts from which to determine its truth or falsity?

A consideration of the causes of this Second World War in their relation to German history of the past affords large evidence that this war is merely another chapter in a long history of German aggression. Its fundamental causes, like those of the First World War, lie in the past of Germany. This war is older than Hitler, as the First World War was older than the Kaiser. Militarism, the goose step, autocracy lie far back in German history and have been strong tendencies for generations. In a very real sense this Second World War is an attempt to redeem the failure to achieve the objects of German policy in the First World War. The same facts made familiar then reappear now: the encirclement of Germany by her "aggressive" and "imperialistic" neighbours; Pan-Germanism in its purest sense, the re-annexation by Germany of the Germans living outside its political frontiers; the need for raw materials; the need for markets; the necessity of colonies. Germany again appears strangled by the British fleet, cramped in Europe by the position of the British Isles, overpowered in the world by the British Empire. As the song of hate against England was sung in German music halls in 1914 amid cheers of appro-

bation, so the new song has appeared to give the key to the present war feeling—"When We Sail for England." While there exist many differences, the Pan-Germanism of the First World War is, more nearly than a great many people are going to like to believe, being revived today. It is, therefore, in the great tendencies of Prussian and German history that the fundamental causes of this present war lie.

Beyond much doubt, another cause is to be found in the fact that Germany was defeated but neither weakened nor crushed in 1918. Even the army was not destroyed. Germany as a nation emerged from the war stronger relatively than did the victors. Not for the first time did the vanquished emerge from a great European conflict less damaged than the conquerors. France lost by far the most heavily. One-third of France was practically destroyed, the bulk of it just before the armistice as a mere act of vandalism so that her territory should be returned to her desolate. In the First World War Germany was defeated but was left strong enough to reorganize in less than a generation. Defeat by no means convinced the Germans that victory was impossible. On the contrary, it left the impression that but for certain adventitious circumstances, almost accidental, victory would have been won. While no historian accepts for a moment Hitler's idea that a Jewish conspiracy caused the defeat or the notion of "the stab in the back" at home or the idea, at present repeated in Germany, that the nation was starved out and not beaten in the field, yet these point the moral. Germany should have won the First World War: but for certain circumstances which even the Reichstag Committee of Inquiry could not quite determine, there would have been no defeat.

It has been common to say—all too common—that the cause of the present war is the Treaty of Versailles, which humiliated Germany, roused her national feeling therefore, and imposed upon her terms which were criminal in the extreme. I do not believe that there is in this contention any truth whatever. That Treaty was certainly not the worst ever made, nor was it the cause of Hitler's régime nor of the present war in any such sense as is usually meant. It is, however, distinctly related to this conflict, for phases of it created the situation out of which Hitler was able to develop the war. These phases were not those penalizing Germany, but unfortunately those which intended to establish democracy and

liberty in Eastern Europe. Because Germany had been defeated but was neither destroyed nor even weakened, it was apparent to the Allied statesmen that some steps must be taken to prevent at least an immediate recurrence of the conflict. The one practical idea was in truth not practical. It promised little but was adopted because there seemed to be no other alternative. Austria-Hungary had been broken up before the armistice by its own subject peoples, all of whom ardently desired political independence. Many other groups in Eastern Europe had for generations sought political independence and saw now a golden opportunity to secure it. A series of buffer states, as they were called, was accordingly erected in Eastern Europe in the hope that they might oppose Germany on the one side and Russia on the other. In order to give them strength and economic independence, as much territory as possible was comprehended within their frontiers, and they were perforce created out of areas previously in the old Austria-Hungary, in the old Russia, and in Germany herself. The purpose was perhaps in the minds of some to weaken Germany, but the clear idea of the majority of negotiators at Versailles was to satisfy the national aspirations of numbers of European peoples hitherto oppressed. Nevertheless, in an endeavour to accomplish what seemed then to the world at large a laudable purpose, territory was taken from Germany and from Russia. In some very real sense, the recovery of this territory is one of the objects of the present war. Danzig, the Polish Corridor, the old Province of Posen, Upper Silesia were thus lost in 1919 by Germany. Russia hastened to seize once more this autumn territory taken from her in 1919.

The new buffer states gave Germany an opportunity of which the Republic was either unable or unwilling to avail itself, but which Hitler has appreciated and which he has utilized to the full. The new states unfortunately were themselves not nations, but mere conglomerates possessing no racial or political unity, no common tradition of administration or law, no common patriotic aspiration. They suffered from the first from internal weakness, and in most of them civil war was narrowly averted from time to time. Unfortunately, too, they were hostile to each other, suspected each other of conspiracies and plots, and presented to Nazi Germany no united front as nations and no compact, well-organized units as independent states. It was possible for this reason for Hitler to play upon their mutual antipathies, to negotiate

with the racial malcontents in all of them, and to secure a direct assistance in Austria, the Sudeten, Slovakia, Danzig, and various parts of Poland, which greatly facilitated his annexations. In this sense the Treaty of Versailles was one of the fundamental causes of the present war, not because it humiliated Germany, weakened her as a nation, or destroyed her position in Europe, but because it provided a fertile field in which the seeds of discontent and conspiracy were sown.

It is regrettable that the people of the Allied countries are themselves in some measure responsible for the present war, are themselves guilty of creating a situation which gave Hitler a tremendous advantage. No sooner was the First World War over than Germany began plans for one of the most elaborate efforts of propaganda ever made in history. Its principal achievement was the publication in many volumes of *Die Grosse Politik*, ostensibly the frank confession by a repentant republican Germany of the diplomatic sins committed by the Kaiser and other German statesmen since 1870. This and large numbers of other books, apparently serious in purpose and critical in character, successfully created the belief even in the Allied countries that Germany was not solely guilty of the World War; that she was guilty, if at all, only in a somewhat greater sense than France, Russia, and Great Britain. The idea came to be accepted that Germany had been hardly dealt with after the War because she had been believed guilty. She had been unjustly blamed; she had suffered too much; she had been unnecessarily humiliated; she had indeed been wrongly humiliated.

The natural result was the acceptance by public opinion pretty generally throughout the Allied nations, and in neutral states, that some concessions at least to Germany would be wise and, after all, no more than just. If Germany had suffered too much, a balance should be struck. If she had been unduly weakened, some territorial changes would not be unfair or unreasonable. If she had been too drastically disarmed, an increase in the German army was even desirable. This opinion went far to secure for Hitler acceptance of his first measures. It permitted him to announce without opposition in March, 1935, the rearmament of Germany and the restoration of conscription. It permitted him the following March, again without opposition, to reoccupy the Rhineland. Probably this moment was the most important in

recent years. It was the turn of the tide. After it, nearly all that has happened was logical and even simple. Resistance should have been made to the reoccupation of the Rhineland and a halt there called to Hitler's policy. But the general public opinion in England and France at that time would probably not have accepted or permitted any attack upon the Rhineland.

It seemed, in view of the great propaganda of the preceding fifteen years, a concession which ought as a matter of fact to be made to a weak, humiliated, and struggling nation. At the time the most popular view outside Germany gave the Hitler régime only from three to six months longer to live. There was no essential danger in what was going on. The régime itself could not last. Changes were no doubt also made easier because there had never been any idea at Versailles that the disarmament of Germany would be, could be, or should be permanent, nor that the German armies should be kept out of the Rhineland the moment it became clear that any reopening of the war was no longer intended. How far on this latter point they were wrong!

Besides, Hitler was vastly aided by the recovery of Russia, the apparent success of the Five Year Plans, the gathering strength of the Soviet régime, all believed for years impossible. The menace of Hitler seemed at the time far less than the menace of Communism. Indeed, a not inconsiderable element of British political opinion, with some adherents in high places, held that the wisest thing to do was to strengthen Hitler so that Germany might be prepared to defend herself against a Communist revolution bent upon the conquest of all Europe. To this view the successes of the Popular Front in France and in Spain lent colour. Communism was gaining and some talk actually occurred at the time of the necessity of an alliance between Great Britain and Germany to oppose it. Of course, later events were by no means foreseen. But the acceptance of the version of German history presented by the propagandists did in direct and vital ways facilitate the first and all-important moves of the Nazi régime. Thus was created the basis for future success.

There followed two years of unparalleled aggression and faithlessness to treaties and promises, and the acts and results of these years are undoubtedly the immediate cause of the present war. They convinced Hitler that everything was possible, provided that it was undertaken a step at a time. They convinced the

greater part of the rest of the world that no more must be permitted if the domination of Europe by Germany and the establishment in it of a régime of oppression and brutality was to be avoided. The annexation of Austria in March, 1938, was accompanied by the most explicit and definitive assurances to all surrounding states that no further steps were intended. Czechoslovakia in particular was offered Hitler's most solemn guarantee of her integrity. Six months later at Munich it became obvious that his promises were worthless. The Sudeten was yielded to him and once more he pledged to respect the integrity of the remainder of that nation for the rest of time. It was, he solemnly assured the world, his last territorial demand in Europe. Partly because Great Britain and France believed him, partly because Mr Chamberlain was firmly convinced that the alternative was a European war, the Munich Pact was signed.

Once again the futility of believing any assurances, however solemn, made by Hitler or his ministers was demonstrated. Six months later, Bohemia and Moravia were annexed. This act utterly changed the situation. Hitherto all the states of Eastern Europe, in particular Hungary and Poland, had not hesitated to negotiate with Hitler or to oppose him, firm in the conviction that under all circumstances their independence was completely assured. Hitler wished Pan-Germanism, the annexation to Germany of all Germans, the expulsion from Germany of all non-German elements. He wished to establish a purely racial state and to this end wished to rid Germany not merely of the Jews but of all other elements which were not definitely Nordic, Aryan, or German, whichever phrase is correct. Under no circumstances did he wish Slavs in Germany. Inasmuch as Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and the rest were overwhelmingly non-Germanic, they did not believe that any risk whatever existed of conquest or annexation. It was not, in view of Hitler's past policies, to say nothing of his book, thinkable for a moment.

Partly because these states of Eastern Europe so firmly believed this idea, partly because the statesmen of other nations themselves thought it true, the rest of Europe felt that in the main no danger existed of a literal conquest by Germany of Eastern Europe. The annexation of Bohemia and Moravia, Slav states, opened at once a vast and terrifying prospect. Hitler had been misunderstood, if indeed he had not intended to be misunderstood.

Conquest apparently was planned and was apparently only too possible. The result was the determination of Great Britain and France to oppose with arms in the field and on the sea, to their utmost, any further step of any kind. No further aggrandizement could be permitted; no promises or assurances from Hitler or his ministers could be of the slightest value. They made the issue clear to Hitler and he nevertheless forced the war. He understood that he was precipitating a European war when he did it. The act was so understood in Great Britain and France. It seems even true that a sigh of relief was breathed by the French and British people when they learned that the issue was at last joined and that there would be no more compromises nor peaceful acceptance of his aggression.

Is it straining historic parallels to see in this narrative far more than Hitler and the Nazi leaders? Does he not himself reflect and represent German tendencies and policies which have a long history? Has he not revived past policies? Does he not plan an extent and character of aggression which would have gladdened the heart of Frederick the Great or of Baron vom und zum Stein? Much was written in the First World War about the long history of Prussian aggression. Little has been said about it for the last fifteen years, but were our predecessors wholly wrong?

Looking back twenty-five years to the First World War leads one who lived through it as a professional student and commentator to more thoughts than can possibly be expressed in an article, but there are one or two ideas in relation to it which are germane to this present inquiry. There has been in Britain and France, and quite clearly, too, in the British Empire, a movement favouring the present definition of Allied war aims. The Allies had already announced that they would fight until the Nazi régime in Germany was ended, the aggressive conquests of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland redressed, and a new order of peace assured in Europe. The general aims could hardly be more clearly stated. But no hint even has yet been given as to what exact concessions by Germany would satisfactorily establish a new order in Europe and guarantee liberty and democracy. The detailed ideas which would satisfactorily achieve the purposes of the Allies, many have felt, should be stated now, partly because they would make clearer, for the general public in the Allied countries exactly what the armies are fighting for and partly in the hope that negotiations

to achieve such ends might become possible in the near future. Both the Allied governments have properly declined to make any such announcement.

Unquestionably we have here, and very fortunately, the influence of the First World War. It is to be hoped that the general public throughout the British Empire, throughout France, and in all neutral countries, can be brought to understand the experience then with war aims. It was certainly catastrophic. One hope is, and indeed it seems to be thoroughly warranted at present, that the Allied states will not repeat the mistakes of the previous war, and that the Germans will commit all their earlier blunders and a few additional. When the First World War began, an effort was made to define war aims privately between the governments, and certain memoranda about the desirable terms were exchanged. Presently, in 1915, Italy entered the war and demanded as the price of her aid a definite treaty embodying the Allied acceptance of her demands. The latter were high and sweeping and more or less involved all the expectations of the Triple Entente from the war. Gradually further treaties were signed in consequence between Great Britain, France, and Russia themselves, embodying a notion of the object of the war to be achieved and the terms of peace to be exacted. They were precisely of the concrete nature now demanded by liberal opinion and set forth in particular the territorial changes in the map of Europe which seemed necessary to assure peace for the future.

When the war was over, the futility of the attempt to define war aims during its course became clear. The course of the war had not been foreseen, the real situation at its end not suspected in the least. Russia had disappeared during the conflict. The Revolution of 1917 had destroyed the old monarchy and established Bolshevism in its place. Neither France nor Great Britain nor anyone else had the remotest idea of including the new Russia in the Peace Conference, yet the general notion of the settlement had presumed the continued assistance of Czarist Russia to support and guarantee the peace. It was not merely true that Russia was to receive much, but it was also true that her aid and in particular her existence, strength, and geographical position to the east of Germany were necessary to establish peace at all as the Allies envisaged it in 1914, 1915, and 1916. Not only had the details of the plan become impossible of execution; the whole plan itself

had been destroyed because the balance of power in Europe on which it was based had disappeared. The war had been fought by an alliance between nations in Western and Eastern Europe and would end, it had been of course supposed, with Great Britain and France on one side of Germany and Russia on the other. On this the entire notion of war aims and of the peace had been based. The war ended with only the Western Allies left and the whole idea of the settlement had to be completely revised.

In addition, Austria-Hungary had collapsed and had dissolved into its various component parts even before the armistice and was no longer in existence when the Peace Conference assembled at Versailles. Yet all previous ideas of the peace had presumed the continuance of Austria-Hungary as a great power. The Conference literally had to discuss not how Austria-Hungary could be fitted into the scheme of a new Europe but whether it should, or indeed could, be restored at all. Once again all previous ideas of the peace became not merely inexpedient, but impossible of execution.

Then the United States had entered the conflict in 1917 and was naturally entitled to a seat at the peace table. While the United States made no territorial demands of any sort, it was already clear before the war ended that President Wilson had exceedingly definite ideas about the settlement. He had promulgated fourteen points about it without at all consulting Great Britain, France, or Italy, and was apparently ready to oppose them all in favour of international comity and a League of Nations. South America had also entered the war on the Allied side, had also expectations of future recognition and seats at the peace table, had also not been consulted by President Wilson, and was fearful that the new position of the United States would be used to increase her power in the Western Hemisphere. Japan had joined the Allies, had overrun Germany's territorial concessions in China, had rendered Russia important industrial assistance in the first three years of the conflict, and fully expected to receive consideration at Versailles.

It became only too obvious in 1918 that all attempts during the war to determine the nature of peace or war aims in advance had been utterly futile. Every detailed idea was either impossible of execution at all or inexpedient. The earlier fundamental notion of a settlement itself had disappeared. Even the nations of im-

portance to sit around the peace table had not been foreseen. In the nature of things there was nothing to do but to begin all over again.

Today this is of the first consequence. In particular it is pertinent to the folly of fighting a war solely against Hitler and Nazi Germany. The experience of the First World War demonstrated conclusively the impossibility of defining in advance anything more than the most general of general ideas about the end of the war. It is to be hoped that British and French liberals at home and in their empires will realize this before they force the governments to make declarations which can only become a source of misunderstanding and perhaps danger in the future. Indeed, a situation already exists which ought to make this utterly clear.

There is at present no accurate idea of who are now fighting the war, much less who will be fighting it at the end. There is no assurance whatever that the Allies are today fighting Hitler and Naziism alone. At the moment no one knows whether Russia is really neutral or secretly on the German side. No one knows—perhaps even Stalin does not himself know—whether Russia will not presently begin to attack Germany. The Soviet may not ally itself with Great Britain and France but may nevertheless fight Germany independently for reasons of its own. It may also be that the expectations earlier in this year of an alliance between the present Allies and the Soviet were not wholly without foundation. Until Russia's position can be positively determined, it is folly to announce the terms of peace with Germany alone on the assumption that the Allies are merely fighting Hitler. They may presently find themselves fighting Germany and Russia, or they may find Russia on their side. Either development will totally alter any terms of peace beyond any possible recognition.

Then there is Italy. All news from Rome describes a fervent popular determination to stay out of the war. The plans of the leaders have, however, been carefully concealed. Much may happen, and much did in 1914 and 1915. Italy may quite conceivably decide to continue, or revive, the Berlin-Rome Axis (whichever statement represents the truth) and may thus join Hitler, or she may decide as in 1915 to desert it completely and join the Allies with all forces on land and sea.

Then there is the United States. Today she is neutral, and from the President down, appears determined to maintain neutrality. Opinion in the United States, however, is by no means neutral, and certainly whatever happens the United States will not join Hitler. But she may join the Allies, and if she does, any war aims or ideas of peace drawn up without taking that fact into account will be utterly worthless. Until, in fact, the attitude towards the war of Russia, Italy, the United States, and perhaps a good many other nations, is definitely known, any attempt to define the terms of peace is folly. If the experience of the First World War had not already proved the inexpediency of attempting to define war aims in advance, surely the present situation itself ought to do so. Naturally Hitler suffers from similar disabilities on his own side and is no more able under present circumstances to foresee what he will himself want to do within the next weeks than are the Allied statesmen.

BROWNING'S POETRY: FIFTY YEARS AFTER

WILLIAM O. RAYMOND

THOUGH it is now fifty years since the death of Robert Browning, the time is yet unripe for a definitive estimate of his place amongst English men of letters. During his lifetime he experienced, perhaps to a greater extent than any of his contemporaries, the vicissitudes of a poet's lot. A long period of depreciation, in which his poetry was a by-word for difficulty and obscurity, was followed by a sudden access of fame. From the time of the publication of *The Ring and the Book* in 1868-9 until his death in 1889, his niche beside Tennyson as one of the two master poets of the Victorian era was secure. Criticism was succeeded by panegyric, reaching its acme in the adulation of the Browning Society and its mushroom offshoots in England and America.

In the fifty years that have passed since Browning's death, his poetic reputation has varied as widely as in his lifetime. The pendulum of critical opinion has again swung violently from one extreme to the other. In particular, Browning has suffered, along with Tennyson, from the general reaction inimical to Victorianism and all its works which has characterized the opening decades of the twentieth century. There are signs that the nadir has been reached, and that a juster and truer appreciation of the Victorian epoch is at hand. But we are still in the wake of that inevitable shift of literary evaluation which marks the transition from one generation to the next. The baiting of Victorianism continues to be a favourite sport of modern writers; and prevailing currents of present-day historical and aesthetic criticism run counter to some of the cherished ideals and standards in life and art of our Victorian forerunners. Part of this censure is wholesome, part is regrettable, but the winnowing of our Victorian inheritance by the fan of time is as yet incomplete.

A tentative estimate, within brief compass, of Browning's place in English letters must strive for centrality of view. In reckoning with a poet of such far-ranging interests, it is important to insist that he be appraised first of all as an artist. However beguiling the by-paths of his work in literature may be, it is essential to keep steadily in sight the beaten highway, lit by the flash of his genius, where his powers are exhibited at full stretch.

Yet such an emphasis should not be inconsistent with a recognition of the composite nature of Browning's contribution to English poetry. In certain ways he is both an intellectual and a moralist, and the philosophical, ethical, and theological aspects of his writings are fruitful subjects of inquiry. Much has been said concerning the confinement of these elements of his work within a set Victorian mould. But in dealing with a mind of a rare order and a poet of genius, stress should be laid upon those gleams of intuition which break through the conventional Victorian framework with keen insight into the heart of life and the problems of man's destiny. Such a reverie as that of Pope Innocent XII, in *The Ring and the Book*, is no mere collection of theological platitudes. It is a definitive summing up of Browning's philosophy of life, and a high water-mark of metaphysical thought in nineteenth-century poetry, enriched by acute religious perception.

Nevertheless, it is inevitable that a study of the didactic interests of Browning often leads to the periphery rather than to the centre of his poetry. Within their sphere, prodigious mental energy or moral fervour tends to obscure the poet. There is in him a conflict between imagination and intellect, only resolved in the poems of happiest vein, written between 1840 and 1870, beginning with *Pippa Passes* and ending with *The Ring and the Book*. For the understanding of his view of life, the deep-seated opposition between faith and reason pivotal to his thought, his ethical outlook, his conception of the relation between God and man and of man's place in the universe, a consideration of the earlier and later poems lying outside his golden period of imaginative vision is indispensable. Nor can the depths of Browning's analysis of character be plumbed without a knowledge of those stages of his work which abound in subtle probing of impulse and motive, the incidents in the development of the soul underlying outward action.

In order to comprehend these varying interests, a student must toil through the labyrinth of *Sordello*, "a bewildering potpourri of poetry, psychology, love, romance, humanitarianism, fiction, and history." He must wrestle with poems which in the aggregate, at any rate, tax his patience and mental faculties even more than that "Giant Despair" of English letters. Some of the later writings of Browning, while they contain lines and passages of sheer poetic beauty, are jungles of involved argument. The mind reels amid

the elusive, ever-shifting sophistries of *Fifine at the Fair* and *Aristophanes' Apology*, or is repelled by the sordidness of *Rea Cotton Night-Cap Country*. Though the poet tells us that a delectable ortolan is sandwiched between the plain bread of *Ferishtah's Fancies*, the appetite of the average reader is hardly reconciled to the crust he must crunch before reaching the toothsome bird.

Even the wit and dexterity of Browning's numerous studies in casuistry scarcely atone for their redundancy. We are dizzied by their juggling and wearied by their tortuousness. *Mr. Sludge "The Medium," Bishop Blougram's Apology*, and *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* are overweighted with ratiocination. The hair-splitting arguments of the lawyers in *The Ring and the Book* make gnarly and tiresome reading, and their crabbed forensic quibbles are only slightly enlivened by quaint Latin puns illustrating the humour of pedants. Whatever tribute is due to Browning's ingenuity in constructing these cumbersome leviathans of verse, the most ardent devotee of the poet, when caught in their toils, must compare his state of mind to that of Milton's spirits in torment, who "found no end in wandering mazes lost."

Happily for Browning's enduring fame as an artist, he has written a large body of fine poetry in which he was able to exorcize his intellectual devil. He cast it from him, even as the hero of one of his poems, in rollicking mockery of arid scholasticism, tossed the bulky tome of Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis into the crevice of a garden tree. "Plague take all your pedants, say I!" It is a pleasure to turn from the "grey argument" of tracts of his verse to the magic of such poetry as is garnered in *Dramatic Romances* and *Men and Women*. Here imagination has not been supplanted by dialectic; and passion and intuition are enlisted in the depicting of character and situation with swift and brilliant portraiture. The sweep and vivacity of Browning's humanism are a perpetual source of delight. As a humanist he is of the lineage of Chaucer and Shakespeare, a poet of whose work it may be said, "here is God's plenty." Above all other Victorian writers, he has that spaciousness of mind we are wont to link with the Elizabethans. Spiritually a disciple of the Renaissance, he is akin to that great age in his zest of life, *élan* of temperament, overflowing curiosity regarding the ways and works of man. His creative genius has many facets and in richness and versatility is unsurpassed in nineteenth-century English literature. How far-flung is his poetic

net and what treasure-trove he brings to land! Strange fish sometimes, but all

> Live whelks, each lip's beard dripping fresh
> As if they still the water's lisp heard
> Through foam the rock-weeds thresh.

I intend to centre my estimate of Browning on his artistic quality. This, in itself, has various aspects, and many of them must be left untouched. His dramatic gift, its capacity and limitation, is a fascinating theme, but it has been exhaustively written on from various points of view. The style and diction of his verse have been the subject of a number of technical treatises. I have in mind, rather, to dwell on what may be called the elemental spirit of Browning's art. This choice is in part due to a wish to take issue with what I conceive to be the general drift of Browning criticism at present. If I interpret this rightly, its quarrel is with the whole tone and temper of the poet's work, not with this or that specific weakness.

An initial definition is, therefore, necessary. What is the basic element which inhabits and glints through the body of Browning's verse as its pervasive and animating soul? Can we in reading his numerous poems, so diverse in theme and setting, "loose their subtle spirit" in a cruce, like the Arab sage of *In a Gondola?*

Writing to Elizabeth Barrett in 1845, Browning spoke of his poetry as momentary escapes of a bright and alive inner power and (in a figure of speech) compared it to flashes of light he had seen at sea leaping out at intervals from a narrow chink in a Mediterranean pharos. The vehemence and impulsiveness of Browning's verse have been universally recognized. Both the form and content of his poetry are vividly impressionistic. His favourite medium is the dramatic monologue, which in his best work is the distillation of a crucial moment of human experience. Light is focused at one point in a white heat of concentration and intensity. In the revelation of the significance of the precipitous moment, vivacity and turbulence are outstanding attributes of his poetic diction and spirit.

Yet the general recognition of the flair or impetuosity of Browning's poetry has by no means been accompanied by unanimity of opinion concerning its merit. Judgment of this essential quality has been a battleground of controversy, dividing the poet's admirers and detractors into hostile camps. Before singling it out for praise,

it is, therefore, well to glance at some of the criticism it has provoked. "Cockney sublime, cockney energy," was FitzGerald's jaundiced comment. In our own day, Mr. Santayana, in an essay, *The Poetry of Barbarism*, has scored the work of Browning as that of "a thought and art inchoate and ill-digested, of a volcanic eruption that tosses itself quite blindly and ineffectually into the sky." Santayana likens Browning to Whitman, and in this connection has been followed by T. S. Eliot.

The germ of that approach to Browning's writings which emphasizes their so-called barbaric, Gothic, ultra-romantic elements, may be found back in 1864, in Bagehot's *Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning; or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry*. It is a conception that was taken up and enlarged upon by Chesterton in his arresting but untrustworthy biography of the poet. Of late it has been made a formidable weapon of attack in the hands of a school of aesthetic thought which extols classical standards and is deeply distrustful of romanticism. F. L. Lucas has given recent expression to this neo-classicist credo in *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*. Our appraisal of it will depend on whether we regard romanticism as abnormal and pathological, or as rooted in an experience of life as normative and intrinsic as that on which the classic tradition is based. It is important to recognize that criticism of Browning as voiced by Babbitt, Santayana, F. L. Lucas, and T. S. Eliot, is an offshoot of a general neo-classicist position.

Viewed as a whole, the modern indictment of the energy of Browning's poetry seems a weighty one. At present, the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic aspects of his outlook on life are all suspect. To Santayana, the poet's vagrancy of impulse is indicative of the barbarity of his genius, the essence of which lies in the fact that to him "life is an adventure, not a discipline; that the exercise of energy is the absolute good, irrespective of motives or consequences." To Babbitt, Browning's unrestrained emotion is an example of those centrifugal and neurotic tendencies that, from the standpoint of neo-classicism, are regarded as evidence of a decadent romanticism. Passion and sensation, we are told, run riot in his poetry, and there is an utter lack of classical decorum, balance, and repose. To Mr Lucas, there is a trace of a bouncing vulgarity in Browning's energetic verse, which smacks too much of the hearty hail-fellow-well-met manner of a Philistine. Metaphori-

cally speaking, the unfastidious poet slaps his readers on the back, while the jarring dissonances of his metres recall the comment of an earlier critic that all his poetry is summed up in the line,—"*Bang, whang, whang,* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle,* the fife."

Every man, it has been said, has the defect of his quality, and it might be added, every poet in his art has the defect of his quality. Browning's energy and vitality at times din the ear and become strident and overpowering. Though "barbarism" is not supposed to be a mid-Victorian vice, there is something unbridled in his rush of passion and the militant romanticism of his verse. He can write metallic poems and rhyming exercises. When he is lost in the Cretan labyrinth of his longer poems, his style is as crabbed and involved as his subject-matter.

But the error and insufficiency of the criticism I have been reviewing seems to be that it fastens exclusively on the negative rather than on the positive aspect of the poet's elemental attribute. For it is precisely the dash or verve of his poetry which constitutes its perennial originality and attractiveness. It is a strain running like an *elixir vitae* through his verse in its golden era, giving it headiness and flavour. We are reminded of the violent rush of a mountain torrent frothing and seething amongst rocks and fretting its channel, but compensating for its lack of smooth rhythmical flow by the spin and dance, the spray and sparkle of its waters. "Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound." From the critical censure of Browning's energy and impulsiveness we turn away, as our eye falls, perchance, with renewed delight on the opening lines of *Pippa Passes:*

> Day!
> Faster and more fast,
> O'er night's brim, day boils at last:
> Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
> Where spurting and suppressed it lay. . . .

The relation between the form and content of the poetry of Browning is often a tension rather than a harmony. "All poetry," he once wrote to Ruskin, "is the problem of putting the infinite into the finite." It would carry us too far afield to show how the antithesis of infinite and finite is perpetually in his thought. But it is clear that the crux of the struggle in his life as an artist was the difficulty of bodying forth the content of his imagination and intellect in adequate poetic forms. In *Sordello,* which in many

ways is a confessional document, there is a vivid account of the hero's attempt to forge a new language, in an Italian dialect, capable of expressing the novelty of his thoughts and perceptions. The analogy between this and Browning's wrestling with language in unmistakable. Like Sordello, he was striving to make his diction a suitable vehicle for the new type of analytic poetry he was writing. The arduousness of the process is realistically described:

> He left imagining to try the stuff
> That held the imaged thing, and let it writhe
> Never so fiercely, scarce allowed a tithe
> To reach the light—his Language.

Sordello, from the point of view of style, is a gigantic experiment in artistic technique. It is apprentice work of a faulty kind, yet through its convolutions the poet was feeling his way towards his true manner.

And when, after the mirkiness of *Sordello*, the art of Browning begins to clear nobly in *Pippa Passes*, discovers its true bent in *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances*, and reaches its meridian in *Men and Women*, the triumph of his style is all the more impressive because it has been hardly won. In the dramatic monologue of medium length, he found the poetic instrument he had vainly sought in *Sordello*. His metres and diction instinctively adapt themselves to impressionistic vignettes of picturesque situations and crucial moments in the lives of men and women, often enriched by pregnant historical or artistic backgrounds. Tension of style remains, but it is a close-packed, sensitive tension that is responsive to the subtle and varied play of highly charged thought and emotion. The tempo of Browning's diction in his great dramatic monologues is rapid to the point of abruptness. The metres have the beat of a driving energy. The music of his verse is uneven rather than smooth flowing, involving frequent suspensions and resolutions.

Le style c'est l'homme; and the racy, colloquial style of Browning in the best of his dramatic monologues is a revelation of his intrinsic quality. He has used a greater variety of metres than any other modern poet, but his verse is never rigidly set in a conventional mould. In reading Tennyson's lines—

> All in the blue unclouded weather
> Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle leather,

we realize that the imagery is enclosed in a sedate metrical framework. But when Browning writes,

> To mine, it serves for the old June weather
> Blue above lane and wall,

there is a natural felicity in the utterance which shakes itself free from formal trappings.

Within its own province, there is a finality in the organic structure, the Sophia and Technê of Greek art; where communication is so wedded to inspiration, form to content, that, as Browning has pointed out in *Old Pictures in Florence*, it achieves perfection in the sphere of the finite. But romantic art, as an emanation of the spirit of man in one of the two basic moments of his experience, has a genius of its own. It may lack the radiance of classic art, that clarity and harmony representative of "the depth and not the tumult of the soul." Yet there is a place on the altars of literature for the Dionysiac fire of romantic art: Dionysiac fire at times, but, when it burns as a purer flame,—the light of the Holy Grail. Poetry must in certain moods reveal the tension of the spirit straining at the leash of form, and infinite passion shattering the web of finite expression:

> Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped.

Therefore, despite the frown of the classicist, a lover of Browning's poetry may take pleasure in its romantic beauty and in the free rein given to passion and sensation. He may enjoy its impressionistic glooms and glances, its live and nervous diction responsive to the "moment one and infinite" of electrically charged emotion. He may feel the justification of a content that overweights the form, and a tension that is like the pent-up energy of a storm-cloud:

> There are flashes struck from midnights,
> There are fire-flames noondays kindle.

A few examples of the flair and verve of Browning's verse may be cited at random from the poems composed between 1840 and 1870.

The sensuousness of Browning's imagery is vivid and often opulent, but never cloying or languorous. He has too much energy ever to indulge in the sleepy sensuousness of Spenser. Frequently his imagery is associated with a wealth and exotic splendour of colour. In *Popularity*, his eye revels in the Tyrian blue or purple

dye extracted from a secretion in the shell of the murex, and he combines this colour with the lustre of gold in two dazzling pictures. The dye, he tells us, is

> Enough to furnish Solomon
> Such hangings for his cedar-house,
> That, when gold-robed, he took the throne
> In that abyss of blue, the Spouse
> Might swear his presence shone
>
> Most like the centre-spike of gold,
> That burns deep in the bluebell's womb,
> What time with ardours manifold,
> The bee goes singing to her groom,
> Drunken and overbold.

Images of light, sound, and motion are conjoined in the triumphant close of *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, where the philosophic argument of the Jewish sage takes imaginative wings:

> Look not thou down but up!
> To uses of a cup,
> The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
> The new wine's foaming flow,
> The Master's lips aglow!
> Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?

Abt Vogler is a fine example of a sustained piece of imagery, representing a crescendo of feeling evoked by music. In other poems, imagery flares forth at the peak of an emotional mood like a beacon of passion. How the lines kindle in *The Statue and the Bust*, when the cowardly and procrastinating lovers are contrasted with the militant saints of God!

> Only they see not God, I know,
> Nor all that chivalry of his,
> The soldier-saints who, row on row,
> Burn upward each to his point of bliss.

Browning's descriptions of nature are as impressionistic as his vistas of human life, and reveal to an equal degree his elemental property. There is occasional tranquillity in his landscapes, but as a rule this is the brief hush that follows or precedes a moment of highly wrought emotional tension. As the lovers in *By the Fireside* wait for the flash of revelation that is to fuse their lives in one, the brooding quietness of evening o'erhangs woodland and mountain.

Oh moment, one and infinite!
The water slips o'er stock and stone;
The West is tender, hardly bright:
How grey at once is the evening grown—
One star, its chrysolite!

But Browning's typical delineation of nature is in keeping with the high tide of dramatic passion that surges through his poetry. In *Pippa Passes*, the lightning seems to search for the guilty lovers, Sebald and Ottima, like the bared sword of divine justice.

Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned thro' the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,
As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me; then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead.

In *The Ring and the Book*, the Pope's one hope for the salvation of Guido is visualized through a similar piece of fiery landscape painting.

I stood at Naples once, a night so dark
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth
Anywhere, sky or sea or world at all;
But the night's black was burst through by a blaze—
Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore,
Through her whole length of mountain visible:
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,
And, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea.
So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,
And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.

Browning's delight in brilliant and intense colour blends with his love of Italian scenery. In *De Gustibus*, he prefers a Mediterranean vista, "the great opaque blue breadth of sea without a break," to the pastoral lanes and coppices of England. He takes particular pleasure in the semi-tropical bounty of nature in June:

Well for those who live through June!
Great noontides, thunder-storms, all glaring pomps
That triumph at the heels of June the god
Leading his revel through our leafy world.

The freshness and animation of the poet's landscapes are as typical as their emotional thrust. He pictures Florence as seen in spring "through the live translucent bath of air," when "river and bridge and street and square" are as clear "as the sights in a magic

crystal ball." The common phenomenon of the breaking of ice in a pond gives birth, in *The Flight of the Duchess*, to the following exquisite description:

> Well, early in autumn, at first winter-warning,
> When the stag had to break with his foot of a morning,
> A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice
> That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice,
> Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold,
> And another and another, and faster and faster,
> Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide water rolled.

Il fait vivre ses phrases. It is, as I have striven to show, the incomparable gusto of Browning's poetry that is its essential quality. And this gusto is not the outpouring in art of the hearty exuberance of a Philistine, or the pietistic enthusiasm of an irresponsible optimist. It is rather—if one may apply to it words used by Arthur Symons in connection with the humour of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* and *Confessions*—"the jolly laughter of an unaffected nature, the effervescence of a sparkling and overflowing brain." It has its roots in a sound physical constitution, a fine fibre of intellect, and a glow of life which, to cite Elizabeth Barrett's tribute, "shows a heart within blood-tinctured of a veined humanity."

Undoubtedly, Browning's superb physical health is an element of this gusto. In *Saul*, David sings of "our manhood's prime vigour," the play of muscle and sinew, "the leaping from rock up to rock," and "the plunge in a pool's living water." Idealist though the poet is, there is a genial and aromatic flavour of mother earth in his writings, and he draws sustenance from her which races through his veins like the sap of trees in spring. "Oh good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth!" he exclaims in *James Lee's Wife*. This touch with earth is reflected in his unique chronicling of insect life, that form of animal existence which is in most intimate conjunction with the soil. The prodigal and spawning energy of nature, riotous with life, is whimsically portrayed in *Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis*. The worm, slug, eft, water-beetle, and newt, invading the covers of a ponderous volume, are symbolic of sheer animal frolic, mocking dry-as-dust pedantry and the dead bones of a musty scholasticism:

> All that life and fun and romping,
> All that frisking and twisting and coupling,
> While slowly our poor friend's leaves were swamping
> And clasps were cracking and covers suppling!

Allied with this love of energy in the physical world is Browning's keen perception of the grotesque. For the grotesque is a bold and peremptory shattering of conventional moulds. As Chesterton has said, "The element of the grotesque in art, like the element of the grotesque in nature, means in the main, energy, the energy which takes its own forms and goes its own way."

But the *élan* of the poet's art has more subtle and spiritual springs in his intellectual and emotional gifts. These gifts have their extravagances. The suppleness of Browning's mind and his temperamental impetuosity often lead him to strain at the curb of form. Yet the turns and twists of his verse, his metrical liberties, his unexpected and at times somersaulting rhymes, are usually the bubbling up of irrepressible high spirits, chafing at the yoke of aught that is tame or conventional. It should be noted that he only gives rein to an "outrageous gallop of rhymes" in poems having a certain raciness or bohemianism of content, such as *The Flight of the Duchess*, *Old Pictures in Florence*, or *Pacchiarotto*. When set in their proper perspective and viewed in relation to the whole body of his poetry, these outward flourishes of style, even when pushed to the verge of idiosyncrasy, are not to be condemned sweepingly as barbaric wilfulness. They are often the frothings of a superabundant vitality, a tang of life like that of Fra Lippo Lippi, shattering the moulds of artistic decorum in a spirit of Puckish impishness.

> A laugh, a cry, the business of the world . . .
> And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,
> The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,
> And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
> And play the fooleries you catch me at,
> In pure rage.

Though we must look to the future for an impartial evaluation of Victorian literature, it is evident that Browning, with the possible exception of Carlyle, had a more robust and sinewy mind than any of his contemporaries. He is a great humanist; and however deeply and broadly he quarries in the mine of the thoughts and emotions of men and women, the vein never runs thin, though it may lead at times through tortuous tunnels. The horizons of an intellect of such power and fertility are vast; and linked with this amplitude is the gift of communicating the joy and tingle of his contact with life. In this respect, he allies himself with Chaucer,

Fielding, and Scott. Like them his interest in humanity is unflagging, and while he does not maintain their objectivity of representation, he probes deeper than any of his forerunners into the inner springs of character.

As we travel imaginatively with Browning in many climes and ages, a panorama full of light and colour is unrolled. On a spacious canvas, through an astonishing variety of circumstance, he mirrors the subtle and ceaseless play of impulse and motive flaming up in moments of highly wrought passion into the crux of action,

> When a soul, declares itself—to wit
> By its fruit, the thing it does.

In speaking of the poems of Browning that culminate with *The Ring and the Book*, Mr Osbert Burdett has said: "If it be still urged that the poetry of Browning loses for want of repose, the reply is that, in these poems, we do not miss it but are carried by the poet while we read into his own world of vigorous healthy imagination, a world so rich, vivid, and finely fashioned that it is one of the most original and dramatic possessions of our literature."

While individual judgments are always relative, it is a test of quality when we can return in later years with unabated pleasure to the work of a poet loved in youth, and "obey the voice at eve, obeyed at prime." Browning measures up to this test, because the volume of his poetry is "the precious life-blood of a master spirit." Into its pages, through the alchemy of genius, the elixir of a generous personality has been distilled. In a large human sense, the best of Browning's work does not date,—always a touchstone of worth.

In the most famous passage of *The Advancement of Learning*, Bacon says of poetry: "And, therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind." The classicist may complain that Browning bullies "the shows of things" into submission. Despite his recognition of "the value and significance of flesh," he does at times wrest the body of art, its sensuous elements, in order to

> Make new hopes shine through the flesh they fray,
> New fears aggrandize the rags and tatters:
> To bring the invisible full into play!
> Let the visible go to the dogs—what matters?

Yet it is the informing presence of a discursive, fully charged mind that is an unfailing source of enjoyment to the sympathetic reader of his poetry. Like Donne, whom in many ways Browning strikingly resembles, he might have spoken of "the sinewy thread my brain lets fall." In this fibre of thought, interwoven with ardour of temperament, lies the genesis of his verve and originality —that flash of life which I have singled out as the essential quality of his poetry.

THE AGE-LONG DRAMA OF CHURCH AND STATE

Sir Robert Falconer

THROUGHOUT the history of Christianity Church and State have found themselves in protean relations to each other, amicable for long stretches of time, often sullen, sometimes hostile. But since the Great War the relationship has become radically altered. So much so indeed that over wide areas of Europe, the limits of Christendom, that phase of western civilization which has hitherto been generally unified by a common spiritual faith, have been drastically—perhaps permanently—reduced. The Russian state and Nazified Germany have renounced the Christian religion as accepted hitherto by Europe and the Americas. Until now, the manifold antagonisms that have from time to time arisen between Church and State have been fought out within a civilization in which the Christian religion has had an accepted place. But the verity and intrinsic worth of its principles are denied or challenged by the Russian and the German governments. Even in what remains of Christendom the churches find themselves in a seriously modified situation. Partly by reason of the influence of the aggressive scientific mind, partly of resultant changes in society, the scope of the State has been enlarged and the churches have suffered loss of authority within it. The State has taken over, in the interest of the common welfare of the people, duties for which formerly the churches held themselves responsible, and it is no longer in the mood to share with them the direction of, nor to accept their advice on, activities even in the moral field which may trench on the domain of religion.

I

The problems of our modern world arising out of the existence of influential churches within the State had not appeared on the horizon in New Testament times. When Jesus proclaimed the advent of the Kingdom of God, an idea made so powerful by His personality as to be essentially new, He did not announce this hope in terms of an earthly fulfilment of Jewish national dreams. He bade His followers render to Caesar the things that were his due. He foretold no social revolution, nor did He promise better material conditions. His ideal was, not a world with its injustices and

inequities rectified by human effort, but a society under divine rule for the immediate future on earth. He affirmed that the Kingdom of God would soon be revealed in its fulness in a new heaven and a new earth; but as to the time and manner of its revelation, that was His Father's secret. His followers, during the period of suspense, were to live in a community of love. Something infinitely richer was in store for them which made earthly sufferings of small account, social renewal of subordinate importance, and cultural interests unreal. But into that fellowship of love to, and faith in, Christ whom they worshipped as divine, there was instilled a supreme dynamic principle as to the worth of the individual person in the sight of God and of his duty to realize His will in an earthly society, transient though it was.

Developing this principle, the Apostle Paul led the primitive Christians into a larger view of their place in the present world. He was not only an educated Jew but a Roman citizen. Doubtless he understood little of the Greek ideal, which still lingered in his Hellenistic environment, that the citizen, who was more or less of a private gentleman, was to find in his city the agency whose laws would shape his character and his social activity. But Paul must have absorbed—indeed there is evidence to that effect—the widespread idea that the laws of the city as part of universal law were relatively just and righteous, and that they were, therefore, to be obeyed by the good citizen. He added to this, however, the potent conception of conscience. The Roman state, embodying a measure of justice between men, he regarded as a divinely ordered, or at least permitted, institution to the rulers of which Christians were to submit. This was all the easier for him as it was from the Roman authorities that he received protection against his Jewish compatriots. The earthly Jerusalem was bringing doom upon itself by its rejection of the Divine Messiah, and he appealed to Caesar in Rome. But his converts, whose real citizenship (as he taught) was in heaven, were not to expect to reform the social disorders of the contemporaneous world.

We must keep in mind the difference between the modern conceptions of Church and State and those of supposedly corresponding import in the New Testament. What we understand by the Church in its visible world-wide organizations, especially when these take on a definite national character, did not exist in the New Testament. The early Christians were a brotherhood, held

together by the worship of Jesus and by faith in Him as the Revealer of God, a faith which implied a new moral way of life in a community of love. In so far as they were unified outwardly it was in groups. James, the brother of the Lord, presided over the mother church at Jerusalem, but that church did not legislate for a Church universal. Paul was the authority for the group of churches which owed their existence to his preaching of the Gospel. As for the others, we know almost nothing of their historical origin; but they were not held together by a unity due to an external organization. Paul certainly did introduce the conception of the Church as a Body with members, and he thought of this Body as consisting of the believers in all the individual churches; but they were a unity because they possessed one and the same Spirit. Such orders of a ministry as he outlines concern almost exclusively the local *ecclesia*.

Moreover, in the New Testament there is very little to guide the modern Church as to how it should relate itself to the State. At first the Christian churches were tolerated by the Roman state as new religious associations. But before long there arose persecution of the Christian faith as such, one of the chief reasons being that the imperial rulers saw with concern, among the rapidly increasing secret societies, a new one malignantly honeycombing, as they thought, the established order, while the populace were exasperated by the dissolution of families and the withdrawing of numbers from participation in civic life. To the early Christians civic and social life, outside their groups in cities, constituted the "World," which was characterized not by its civilization or system of government, but by its spirit as alien to or estranged from God. A good deal later than Paul, but not in this out of line with his teaching, the author of the First Epistle of St. John wrote: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof." With such a "world" the Church of believers in Christ could enter into no concordat.

II

In the second century, the Church began to assume unified visibility as an organized body under the direction of bishops in the leading cities of the Roman Empire, and gradually it shaped for itself orders, doctrinal standards, and discipline. But even in the

early fourth century St Augustine taught that the Church was the Kingdom of God on earth, and the ultimate authority even over the State, supreme over all nations. The City of God was not concerned with imbuing civilization with its divine Spirit, but was the Ark of salvation for a perishing world. The Church, however, accepted obediently the laws of the State, and the Imperial government allowed it freedom to carry on its functions under its own legislation. When the great schism separated East and West, the Eastern Empire adopted a very different policy toward the Church from the Western. The Emperor took over so completely the supervision of the Church that it became a department of state, though it still kept its ancient character and retained its laws and culture. It drifted away from the life of the western Church, and in this isolation is found one reason why in its subsequent history the Orthodox church has contributed so little to civilization as we know it. In the West, however, Church and State were kept apart. Gregory the Great, very different in temper from St Augustine, assumed for the first time as Pope the rank of a political prince. Henceforth the Church sought to direct the cultural life of the western world. "The combination of Italian jurisprudence and French theology, philosophy and poetry, created the spirit of ecclesiastical universal civilization."[1] The State was made to a degree the instrument of the Church. But neither authority was in complete control. Pope and Emperor, official hierarchies within the bosom of one society, competed for supremacy. Such a situation would have been incredible among the early Christian groups.

The two greatest figures in the Middle Ages were St Thomas Aquinas and Dante. The former created a system of theology and morals which is today the accepted standard for the thought of the Roman Catholic church. He adopted the Aristotelian philosophy with its final cause, the perfection of the thing or process, the achievement of the function of each according to its own form or idea, and made it serve his conception of the different orders of nature and grace, reason fulfilling its own end as the complement to revelation, and human society its purpose as subordinate to the Church. There is a divinely appointed harmony between nature and grace: a world order based on reason which the State is to maintain, and the Church by its authority to help to secure. Civilization is a unity governed by universal law, and when per-

[1]E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, I, p. 235.

meated by the Christian spirit it becomes a stage in the divine process of the ascent of humanity, and is a moral preparation for the supernatural gifts received by the individual through the Church. The Church, a mystical body in visible form, holds absolute truth both for the individual and for society. It will guide them in their several orders into personal salvation and universal civilization infused with Christian principles. In the present order of human society each individual is to remain contented with his divine "calling," and thereby he will help to maintain the stability of the common life.

Dante, who was born when St Thomas was a boy, took Virgil for his guide through the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, whereas Beatrice conducted him through the celestial regions in the *Paradiso*. Thereby he brought reason and revelation into complete harmony, as the one yields without protest to the other. In the Middle Ages, Virgil was the supreme interpreter of civilization, for "Rome was still in all men's eyes the mother of civilization, the symbol of miraculous power, the supreme ideal of human greatness."[2] Dante, admiring as he did the secular achievements of the Roman Empire, accepted it through Virgil as an ideal for the regeneration of society. But in the Church he saw, notwithstanding corruption in high places, the inspiring source of moral principles and, of course, the fountain of salvation. The unity of civilization was due to the fulfilment by Church and State of their respective functions, the former consecrating the inherited structure of the latter with its culture in its various social orders. But he warned against the "grafting of the sword upon the crook":

> Rome, that the good world made for man's abode,
> Was used to have two suns, by which were clear
> Both roads, that of the world and that of God.
> One hath put out the other; to crozier
> Is joined the sword; and going in union
> Necessity compels that ill they fare,
> Since, joined now, neither fears the other one.[3]

The Renaissance, in its second flowering of the fifteenth century, attempted to revive the Greek ideals of culture. This had been the product of the highest intellectual and artistic powers of natural humanity, cultivated man himself being the greatest work of art.

[2]Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, p. 72.
[3]*Purgatorio*, XVI, 106-12 (Laurence Binyon's translation).

It was in the city state that he attained the supreme realization of his humanism. Into the Italian phase of the Renaissance especially, which was cultivated in rich cities, there entered, along with the classical view of life, a spirit quite alien to the Christian ideal. It cherished for the few the privileges of the intellectual and artistic life, and at the same time emancipated them from the domination of the Church. Even outstanding Popes, owning indeed tenuous allegiance to the Christian faith, diverted themselves in the cold illumination of classical beauty, and like their apostate associates, gave no heed to the *profanum vulgus* at their gates.

III

Luther and Calvin were, of course, the two men who did most for the Reformation, the one by the inspiration of his powerful personality, the other by the constructions of his logical intellect and his administrative genius. Luther had no desire to create a new church; he wished to re-establish the Gospel as he had experienced it in the existing Roman unity. The "word" of Scripture was to be faithfully proclaimed and the sacraments to be dispensed as means of grace for the salvation of the individual soul, who is justified in God's sight by his faith in Christ. Troeltsch sums up the Lutheran ethic in these features: "Confidence in God founded on His grace, the love of one's neighbour which is exercised in the social duties of one's calling, combined with an obedient surrender to the order of society created by the law of nature."[4] This salvation is proclaimed in the state church which is a unified society of those who enjoy in its worship and faith an inward salvation in the love of God. But the Church is to leave to the rulers of the State the control of the social order. By voluntary agreement Church and State realize together the ends of Christian society. This fundamental attitude has led to inertness on the part of the church in social activities, to its eschewing criticism of governmental action, and to its acceptance of policies which have often been hard to reconcile with a Christian outlook. Its esoteric piety has ossified the Lutheran church into a bulwark of conservatism, and fostered a nationalistic spirit which has deprived it of great influence in Christendom as a whole.[5]

[4] *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 509 ff. [5] *Ibid.*, II, pp. 573 ff.

Calvin has been the most powerful influence in international Protestantism. The social and political ideas of his system have sprung from his conception of God and of man's duty to Him. Those who are familiar with the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which is Calvinism in brief form, will recall its definition of God: in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Love is not mentioned. As for man, his Chief End is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever. The moral order of the divine rule is found in the Scriptures in which the Old Testament stands alongside the New. The "saint" or the "elect" is "called," not as in Catholicism and Lutheranism to be contented with his God-given place in society, but to make the moral law effective in the world. No sacrifice or heroism is too great for the greater glory of God, in order to realize on earth the "holy community." The State is a divine institution, but only for the furtherance of the Church which establishes the divine moral order among men. The Church is a universal society and cannot be adequately manifested in any national form. While supported by the State, it is above the State and is essentially a catholic visible body. This view of the Christian community has been the most challenging of all Protestant answers to the Roman church. But the demands of Calvinism were too rigid and austere to be accepted by the masses of the common people in Europe; nor was the State, disengaged as it was by the Calvinists from the Church and subordinated to it, willing for long to accept its advice or to yield to its behests. The attempt of Calvin to establish a state in Geneva, directed by a Presbyterian church, had no enduring influence. Its history demonstrates that a church, when it undertakes to rule society by any supposed divine order, will become a new legalistic authority, and as such will cease to convey to society the persuasive spirit of the Gospel. But the Calvinistic churches did promote the democracy of the new age by their insistence on the dignity of the elect individual, even if they could not base it upon the doctrine of the equality of natural men. The two principles of Calvinism, its insistence on the calling of each to be faithful to his trust, and the acceptance of a universal moral law of nature, consonant with what is revealed in the Scriptures, are among the foundation stones of modern democracy.

IV

Queen Elizabeth, following the policy of her father, kept the reformed church of England under the control of the State. While displaying a measure of toleration, she saw to it that the church should teach loyalty to her authority, and she hoped that by making it uniform and comprehensive she might use it to stabilize society. During her reign two main streams of opinion took their rise within the established church. One bore on its surface those who held that the reformed English communion was a branch of the historic Catholic church with its inheritance of civilization. On the other stream, perhaps equal to the first in volume, were those who sought to carry reform further on the lines of the ecclesiastical organization and way of life which Calvin had created at Geneva. The Puritan current, after a long and stormy course, was either diverted later into brimming channels of dissent, or was left in quiet backwaters, some of which were submerged in the main Anglican stream. Besides contesting ecclesiastics and theologians, there were in the days of Elizabeth and James not a few laymen of the highest culture, such as Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser, Bacon, who, if not in full sympathy with the views of the Puritans, were opposed to the aggressive Anglican prelates and voiced their discontent. Their successors among the gentry became leaders of the resistance to Charles in Parliament.

The Anglican position was given classical expression in the *Ecclesiastical Polity* by the "judicious" Richard Hooker, "the representative man of the Church of England." In opposition to the Puritan principle that "nothing be done in this or any other thing [the administration of worship and sacraments] but that which you have the express warrants of God's Worde for," Hooker insisted that the church of England had her own polity to suit her own nation, though its essential principles were in all the churches. These are primarily found in Scripture, but are also the result of human reason, which has by divine guidance discovered the right basis of government as transmitted in the catholic tradition of the ministry. The Anglican church, having conserved what was true in its Reformation, and as a limb of the body politic, inspires the natural law with divine grace and conveys the "gifts of civilization" to the English people. According to Hooker, the church of England is the nation viewed as a religious community. Had this theory

been more effectively wrought out in the life of the parishes, the Puritans would have been shorn of much of their strength. Hooker, however, held a "point of view to which the religious compromises of Elizabeth's reign wore the aspect of an absolute and unimprovable ideal."[6]

The Puritan conceptions of Church and State have been recently presented in a masterly and impartial manner by Professor Woodhouse in the introduction to his *Puritanism and Liberty*. "Puritanism means a determined and varied effort to erect the holy community and to meet, with different degrees of compromise and adjustment, the problem of its conflict with the world." "The rule of the Saints means the enforcement of the standards of the 'holy community' upon the nation at large." If necessary this reform must be by coercion.[7] The main body of the Puritans, especially the Presbyterians, clung to the doctrine of a state church, but it was to be organized on the lines of Geneva and in accordance with the historical prototypes which they deduced from the New Testament. For many years, beginning with the reign of Elizabeth and continuing into those of James and Charles, Puritan principles were instilled into the minds of large numbers of people by highly educated (chiefly at Cambridge) and intensely earnest preachers, and were widely disseminated in an eagerly read literature.[8] The ferment of deeply felt religious ideas derived from the letter of Scripture, of which that of the liberty of the individual to follow the dictates of his own conscience was a powerful leaven, led to the demand by radicals for freedom from any religio-civil authority and for the separation of Church and State. This was based upon the traditional theory of the existence of the two orders of grace and the natural man. But in practice it was impossible to keep them apart. The religious convictions of the Puritan entered into and defined his attitude to the State. Freedom and the offer of salvation on equal terms to all men were re-inforced by the ancient and widely prevalent view of the natural equality of men under universal law. The liberty of preaching led to the belief that truth would be arrived at by discussion, and this in turn to the assumption that government by agreement should be based on the consent of

[6]Dean Church as in F. Paget's *Introduction to Fifth Book of the Ecclesiastical Polity*, p. 256.

[7]*Puritanism and Liberty*, ed. A. S. P. Woodhouse, pp. (*37*), (*44*).

[8]See William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*.

the governed. This surge of swirling democratic opinion changed the current of politics and shook the foundations of the established church. Though English society refused to accept the full plan of the Puritans for its reformation, the struggle ingrained in the Englishman a conviction of his own rights as a freeman. He must have liberty to follow his conscience: that is the basic principle of democracy.

The church of England also underwent a profound and permanent change. Though the Puritans lost in the struggle, they were so stubborn in defeat that, as soon became plain, there could be no established church in England of pre-Reformation unity which would include all forms of ecclesiastical order and religious faith. Further, the moral and social life of all the people could never again be brought under the control of the church, whether established or non-conforming:

> The failure of the Anglican and Stuart régime was the failure of rulers to foresee, what few men of that time foresaw, that society could no longer be organized as an ecclesiastical polity however tolerant. . . . Individualism could not be denied freedom to express itself and would not be content to put forth ideas only, leaving institutions untouched. It must attempt to reshape the church, to conceive the place of the church in society in quite another way, to develop a new kind of society in which the activity of expression would take many forms. In that society the church would eventually find its place but only beside not above education, literature, science and the press.[9]

It was not until the eighteenth century, when Wesley and Whitefield appeared, that a new power entered into the religious life of the nation. Not only to the masses of the common people did this movement bring a quickening spirit, but it gave rise to Evangelicalism with moral renewal in the established church. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Royal supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs was progressively surrendered into the hands of Parliament, and gradually the church convocations lost their spiritual freedom and were either silent or impotent. In 1833 John Keble preached at Oxford the Assize sermon on "National Apostasy," in which he sounded a clear call to the church to recover control over its own domain. This was the beginning of the Tractarian Movement, in which Newman was for twelve years the outstanding figure. He was intensely fearful that liberalism in the State was doing irreparable damage to the autonomous church,

[9]Haller, *op. cit.*, pp. 247 ff.

though he did not advocate a separation. During the nineteenth century loud demand was made by nonconformists and radical politicians for disestablishment, and the Anglican churches in Ireland and, much later, in Wales had their connection with the State severed. Since then, this demand has lost its insistence. But within the church of England there was such strong party feeling that the desired recovery of its autonomy was hindered. In 1919 Parliament adopted an Act to create a representative council which would advise it on ecclesiastical affairs. But in 1927, and again in 1928, the House of Commons rejected its proposals for the revision of the Prayer-book. Increasingly, voices of high churchmen have been heard demanding for the church freedom from state control even if it means disestablishment. Many advocate a freedom similar to that which the church of Scotland was granted by Parliament in 1921.

The Calvinistic outlook and system prevailed long in Scotland. Presbyterianism became a popular church and helped Scotland to discover a national consciousness. It stood alongside the state and was for the most part its own master. It was of the people, democratic and autochthonous. But as the Scottish conscience has been individualistic and often intractable, so Presbyterianism has been fissiparous. Controversies within, and dissent from, the church in the eighteenth century, culminating in the great Disruption in 1843, resulted in a sadly rent Presbyterianism. But half a century ago healing influences set in, though reactionaries took advantage of hitherto undeclared legal definitions of a church, and the first large union was consummated at great sacrifice of property. Happily, the union of 1929 brought together again almost all divisions in one church of Scotland; and in it the church, while still connected with the state, is given complete freedom to determine its own doctrines and practice.

The creation of the United church of Canada in 1925 was the outcome of negotiations which had been conducted during a quarter of a century between the Congregationalist, the Methodist, and the Presbyterian churches. Each took step by step the course which conformed to its own constitutional procedure, and, acting on the result of large majorities, the three churches asked the Dominion and the provincial Parliaments for the enabling legislation respectively required to incorporate the new church. But a minority in the Presbyterian church contested these petitions on the ground

that the majority of the members, sessions, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly did not constitute the true Presbyterian church in Canada, and that the Assembly had violated its trust. For a time there was doubt at Ottawa and in provincial capitals whether the desired legislation would be secured, but, after long and often acrimonious controversy and resentment on both sides as to the division of property, the United church of Canada was launched. The most outstanding advocate for the legislation in the Dominion Parliament was the Right Honourable Arthur Meighen. With penetrating intellect he went to the root of the matter:

> Those appealing for the legislation say: The question of union or non-union is ours, it is not yours. It is a matter for the exercise of our rights within our spheres. What after all is this power of union? Does it consist in anything more or less than the power to change doctrine? I think the power to change is inherent in the church and that the Assembly has the power delegated to it to express the will of the church in this regard. I entirely dissent from the theory that there exists in the parliament of Canada, or in any court in this country, the right to say what is fundamental in doctrine and what is not. The church must have power to determine how, and to what extent, it exercises those prerogatives, a power unrestrained by any authority whether of parliament or of civil court.

Now, the United church of Canada possesses the right to modify its own creed without suffering any inequitable loss of property for doing so. But if, to make an inconceivable supposition, in the distant future the essential Christian faith should be abandoned by the church, it would then be committing suicide, and the State would probably have to determine the ownership of properties and endowments.

Turning to the United States. Churches are free from state control though they enjoy its protection and hold property as any other incorporated association. While the state has not attempted to restrict the activities of the churches, these have often sought to modify policies of the state. For example the Roman Catholic church, standing in its traditional ways, asks for the creation of separate schools for its own children. By a spasmodic incursion also, a few years ago, it tried to induce the United States government to protest to Mexico against its confiscating ecclesiastical policy. Moreover, not far back, some Protestant churches attempted in several states to prohibit the teaching in the schools of scientific theory which they regarded as undermining their faith. In 1926, it was asserted that Methodists had set up, in Washington,

a bureau to form public opinion and to bring pressure to bear on Congress for political legislation. The reaction from such undertakings has been harmful to the churches.

V

At present, churches and states find themselves in a transformed world. The Soviet state in Russia has displaced the Orthodox church with atheistic communism. "It is a religion and one of the most imperious quality: certain that it is called to replace all other religions; a religion of atheism, for which dialectic materialism supplies the dogma, and of which communism as a rule of life is the social and ethical expression."[10] Throughout the Soviet state there is resentment not only against the church but against Christianity; and success in Russia may forebode deadly opposition to this faith wherever in the world the Marxian philosophy is adopted on a wide scale. While in Italy Fascism has not been so openly hostile to the Roman church as Sovietism to all religion in Russia, the two organizations are uneasily yoked together. The future must be ominous as long as the state is controlled by a dictator like Mussolini, who claims that "the State is the highest and most potent form of personality" and "nothing human or spiritual, in so far as it has any value, exists outside the State."

But most serious of all is the ruthless persecution of the churches, Protestant and Roman Catholic, by the Nazis in Germany. Those who direct their policy repudiate the Christian religion. They aim at bringing under state control every activity which may mould the thought of the people, in order to create in them a mind and disposition based on their own philosophy of life. According to this, Germans are to become a national fellowship of race, blood, and soil. No moral law binds them with all mankind—nothing but German "honour" which is a "deification of the racial soul." The individual must place the dictates of the Nazi leaders above his own conscience, since they decree what is for the welfare of the whole people.[11] This philosophy, which is virtually a new religion, has been enforced by the most unscrupulous propaganda and brutal action: first against the Jews and then against the churches. These

[10]J. Maritain, *True Humanism*, p. 28.

[11]For a documented, detailed, and impressive account of the character of this policy see N. Micklem, *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church.*

latter are not allowed to keep their own schools, nor to teach the Christian faith to their own youth in separate associations; they have been deprived of their rights in respect of marriage between their own members; taxes have been withheld, property alienated; even public worship and preaching is supervised and, while many churches are open, those who attend the services are under suspicion; pastors and priests in numbers have been imprisoned on trumped-up charges. The excuse for all this is that the churches have taken political action against the government; but the gist of the matter is that neither Protestants nor Catholics have been able to co-operate with the Nazis in their anti-Christian policies.

Germany since the Reformation has been the home of many deeply religious movements, and Christianity has been interpreted sympathetically by many of her most eminent scholars, who have put the world in their debt. No branches of the Roman Catholic church have surpassed those of Germany and Austria in their character and work. The Vatican had, from time to time, co-operated successfully with the State by concordats.

The Protestant church has found that its traditional policy of keeping in separate compartments its esoteric faith and its civic activities has become impossible. As long as the state was tolerant of the Christian outlook, the religious Lutheran might accept from it his political creed, but now the state, identified with the Nazi party, repudiates Christian fundamentals, and the authorities have placed "German Christians" in control of regional Lutheran churches, and these are cloven asunder. While Hans Kerrl, the head of the church ministry for the whole Reich, claims to be an evangelical Christian, yet as a "German Christian" he fully accepts the myth of blood and race, and aims at the unification of the German people through religion, the note of which is "one people, one faith." This church is to be entirely subordinated to the State, and to "have nothing to do with the practical things of life but only with faith." Irreconcilably opposed to this "German faith" is the "Confessional church" which clings to the integral Gospel and historic Christianity. There have been deep searching of hearts, severe privation, great sacrifice on the part of pastors and people, but these "Confessional" churches have organized themselves through Germany and have been faithful to their testimony.[12] The laity at large, especially the women, hitherto

[12]N. Micklem, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 ff., 126.

acquiescent as to the status of the Church, were cajoled by the Nazis with the plea that the restraint of pastors in their regular duties was a temporary inhibition to prevent distraction in their campaign against communism. But the exploding fraud, set off by the war deal with Stalin, has dismayed multitudes of quiet souls.

While many Germans of liberal conviction have made heroic protest against the Nazi philosophy and policies, which has involved them in banishment, incarceration, even death, the most sustained resistance has come from the churches. After all, the intellectual is an aristocrat. As a German he may accept a strong government, even if he does not approve of it, in the hope that in time his nation will throw it off; moreover, he inherits no powerful tradition in respect of individual political liberty. The Christian conviction is quite different. Christianity is a universal religion. The Church seeks to save the soul of the humblest of any and every race. To promote the growth of the Kingdom of God on earth, as far as may be, is an obligation for each and all.[13]

VI

Probably a similar situation could not arise in Anglo-Saxon countries. Belief in freedom is such a dominant strain in the character of our peoples that a repudiation of this essentially Christian principle is unthinkable. But in war-time the State tightens its hold on the national life. A government will brook no opposition to measures which it regards as essential to victory. Public opinion, also, is irritated by protests from pacifists or opponents of war policies; but in a powerful nation, which inherits a strong tradition of freedom, it will not demand severity against those who for conscience' sake stand apart. No state, however, will tolerate active propaganda against the prosecution of the war. Such a crisis as the present creates difficulties for many Christians who see in all war the very negation of the divine rule. Though they may detest the Nazi government, they think that to try to check its evils by war is to extend the sway of the Devil. But the overwhelming conviction of the churches is that they must

[13] "Liberalism perpetuates in a secular form an ideal which had first been realized by the Church, and it is very doubtful how far this ideal can be maintained against naturalistic reactions without any religious support at all" (Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, I, p. 325).

approve the present war as a necessary evil. The allied nations are confronted by a government embodying policies and a view of life which threaten not only their own existence, but Christianity itself and the finest attainments of the human soul. Man's free spirit must, for his own salvation, put forth his full strength to grapple with and shackle a deadly foe. So the churches associate themselves with their nation in its war effort. But they have, besides, the primary and difficult duty of keeping alive faith in the rule of a righteous God, the Father of all mankind; they must seek to alleviate the tragedies of war, to restrain hatred, to reduce the stresses that are rending the spiritual web of civilization, and to prepare the mind of their people for a just and humane peace.

When envisaging the future of Church and State in our countries two considerations must be kept in mind: the relation of the democratic State as such to the Church, and the differences in this relationship due to national history.

The State may be defined as by Professor R. M. MacIver: "An association which, acting through law as promulgated by a government endowed to this end with coercive power, maintains within a community territorially demarcated the universal conditions of social order."[14] The Nation is composed of the same people as the State in their economic, religious, ethical, and cultural associations and activities. Each state, as just defined, will continue to have relations with the churches within it, determined by the history and character of its own people. What would hold in England might not hold in Scotland; far less in Canada or the United States. But from now on, it is probable that, with the growth of education and intelligence, the churches will seek less and less, or at any rate will be less permitted, to exert direct influence on the policies of the State. But they will thereby gain much more than they will lose, as they will fulfil better their intrinsic function. Of course no church can control the thought or words of its individual members; and as in the past, the voice of the prophet, or of him who thinks that he is a prophet, will be raised in advocacy of, or in protest against, some policy of the State. The prophet will continue to get his following and even to change legislation; but the most enduring influence of the Church upon the Nation, as distinguished from the State, will come from the deep convictions of its

[14] *The Modern State*, p. 22.

members formed silently year after year, decade after decade, in its common worship, through its clear teachings and by the sincere proclamation of its faith. This will not mean a return to the Lutheran principle that the Christian must confine his religion to an inwardly enjoyed love of God. A church may at any time lift a prophetic voice in the nation for or against some policy which it regards as vital for its faith and the welfare of the people. But there is profound truth in the remark of J. N. Figgis: "In the diffusive consent of the whole Christian body, no less than in the organic expression of the council, lies the true authority of the creed and of the whole law and customs of the Church."[15] The Church must earnestly promote its faith, but this faith is so germane to the highest human values of the secular order that it can take them to itself, as indeed it has already done in its history, and give them new inspiration. Moreover, the intensive spiritual action of the churches on the national life of their several peoples will lead to greater consentient Christian opinion everywhere. M. Maritain hopes for a vitally Christian lay-state,[16] a common unity of Christian friendship co-operating with the State in the realization of its secular and pluralist ends and activities. Fraternal love would be the essential dynamic principle of the new Christendom. This would be made effective through Christian groups working politically but not as a new political party, which would be scattered as a sort of Christian *Diaspora* over the whole surface of the globe. This humanism would carry "the sign of no theocracy other than the gentle dominion of God's love."[17] While this ideal illustrates the fine Christian spirit and hopeful tolerance of M. Maritain, it seems to me that his vision will be most effectively realized as the churches of the world are drawn together in greater mutual forbearance and co-operation, by laying more emphasis on the spiritual and moral truth which they hold in common. Christianity will always be interpreted through national cultures, though it is precisely in the traditional ethics and social customs of a people that half-truths, complacency, and the closed mind lurk. But if the several national churches will stress their essential Christian beliefs, they will become more comprehensive and will enter into closer relations as new structural or federated bodies, within their own

[15] *Churches and the Modern State*, p. 158.
[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 171. [17] *Ibid.*, pp. 249, 239.

country, made feasible by similarities of life and order. This increasingly accordant religious mind will bring its own national contribution to an ecumenical Christendom and promote the spiritual welfare of world-wide humanity. No mighty visible organization will be constructed which might dominate the policies of states, but a common spiritual authority will make itself felt, and, ever and again taking the world at unawares, will be found to have been moulding its opinion silently to the issues of a true humanism.

MELVILLE'S METAPHYSICS OF EVIL

R. E. WATTERS

I

FOR a youth "given to unseasonable meditativeness" a whaling ship, we are told, is admirably qualified to start "the problem of the universe revolving" in his mind.[1] The problem undoubtedly obsessed Melville. In a letter to Hawthorne of June 29, 1851, Melville refers to the "ontological heroics" in which he was wont to indulge with his Lenox neighbour. Five years later, on meeting Hawthorne in England, he recurred to the subject. "Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything else that lies beyond human ken," Hawthorne wrote in his Journal for November 30, 1856. "He informed me that he has 'pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated'; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation, and I think will never rest until he gets hold of some definite belief. It is strange how he persists—and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before—in wandering to and fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sandhills amidst which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other."[2] Melville, then, was a confirmed speculator in metaphysical problems, and even a cursory reading in his books will convince one that he fought out his mental struggles upon paper, placing in an imaginative cosmos protagonists which symbolized in concrete form his abstract questions. That he was aware of this use of symbolism is clear from remarks in his letters, from numerous hints to the reader to look behind the printed word, and from his deliberate employment of parable and illustrative legend, notably in *Mardi* and *Pierre*.[3]

[1] *Moby-Dick*, I, p. 197. The edition of Melville cited in this essay is *The Works of Herman Melville*, London, Constable and Co., 1922-4; where feasible the page references are given in brackets in the text.

[2] Quoted in R. M. Weaver's *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic*, pp. 335-6.

[3] For Melville's awareness of deliberate symbolism see his letter quoted by R. M. Weaver, *op. cit.*, p. 327; in *Pierre* his use of the parable of Enceladus; and in *Moby-Dick* the chapter discussing the symbolism of the colour white, and I, pp. 229-30, 244, 257; II, p. 188.

Probing and questioning all things, Melville persistently sought to wrest some meaning out of the flux of experience, out of the chaos and contradictions he beheld about him. Born into a conventional, middle-class, provincial family in 1819, he grew up in a Panglossian environment of complacent respectability and easy ideals. The death of the father and the bankruptcy of the family subjected the young Herman to a different schooling, and his experiences in the forecastles of ships completed his new, realistic education. For him, as for his character Pierre, "the before undistrusted moral beauty of the world" was forever submerged, as Truth rolled "a black billow" through his soul. Years later when an elderly man, the scars of his early spiritual wounds were still troubling him. In *Clarel* (1876) he writes (I, p. 323):

> . . . most men somehow get used
> To seeing evil, though not all
> They see; 'tis sympathetical;
> But never some are disabused
> Of first impressions which appal.

In *Redburn*, *Typee*, and *White Jacket*, we possess Melville's own picture of his appalling first impressions, of the callousness and brutality of men towards men aboard ship, and the misery wrought by white men, including missionaries, in the South Seas. Moreover, these years revealed the terrors in Nature: winds, waves, and whales, to name but three. Not unnaturally, in recoil Melville's mind was scored with the conviction that profound evil permeated both man and the universe. Melville's bitter rebelliousness against Nature was as different from Emerson's trustful reliance as his savage dissection of man was from the "spiritualised Paul Pry" attitude of Hawthorne.

The harsh experiences into which he was thrust provoked a troubled questioning of the very foundations of his youthful ideals. In a powerful passage in *Mardi* (II, p. 359) this conflict of doubts with the tag-ends of orthodox consolation is given expression:

> Yet vain our surmises. Still vainer to say, that all Mardi [i.e., the human world] is but a means to an end; that this life is a state of probation; that evil is but permitted for a term. . . . Nay, nay. Oro [God] delegates his sceptre to none; in his everlasting reign there are no interregnums; and Time is Eternity; and we live in Eternity now. Yet, some tell of a hereafter, where all the mysteries of life will be over; and the sufferings of the virtuous recompensed. Oro is just, they say.—Then always,—now and evermore. But to make restitution implies a wrong; and Oro can do no wrong. Yet what seems evil to us may be good to

him. If he fears not, nor hopes,—he has no other passion; no ends, no purposes . . . and things that are,—have been,—will be.

In this packed passage Melville has touched upon the chief problems that tormented him: Time and Eternity, the after-life, the relation of man to God, divine ethics, and the rationale of evil and suffering. And like the "enthusiast youth" in *Pierre* (p. 290), Melville was convinced that unless a man "prove recreant . . . or unless he can find the talismanic secret, to reconcile this world with his own soul, then there is no peace for him, no slightest truce for him in this life."

What was the nature of this "talismanic secret"? Babbalanja, the Mardian philosopher, gives us this: "I am intent upon the essence of things . . . that which is beneath the seeming; . . . I probe the circle's centre; I seek to evolve the inscrutable" (II, p. 36). Innumerable other passages of similar purport, displaying a diversity of symbols, converge to a constant meaning: Melville sought some all-embracing explanation of the relation of the Not-Self to the Self, of God, of Nature, of things to what is called the soul.

This is ego-centric, yes; but man is inescapably driven to focus the world to the eye of his soul, since, whatever be the ultimate or absolute nature of things, man is the centre of the universe as he necessarily conceives it.[4] This ego-centricity leads inevitably to man's assigning values to phenomena according to their contribution to his well-being. Instead of confining ethics to the expressions of human will, he reads the universe itself ethically, and is thereupon faced with the problem of good and evil as inherent in the very structure of the cosmos independently of man. Religion's essential teaching is that a moral Will or Intelligence animates the universe, and from this it logically follows that all beings are to some extent dependent upon this Supreme Source. The rationale of beneficent phenomena, or good, being unquestioned (since of obvious human value), at once there arises the problem of responsibility for those phenomena which harass and defeat human well-being, and which ego-centric man has therefore termed evil. But this means questioning not man and his standards, but God and creation; it involves a transition from human ethics to divine ethics. And the ultimate question becomes "Why does God permit evil?" To discover the rationale of evil—"to hook the nose of this leviathan"—Melville

[4] I am indebted to Lewis Mumford's *Herman Melville* for this conception, although there it is developed differently.

was ready to probe "among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world" (*Moby-Dick*, I, p. 166).

When King Media asked of the philosopher what was the ultimate meaning of human life he was told that the question itself is more final than any answer. This contains probably as much of the true answer as man can achieve. It implies that consciousness, desire for knowledge, unceasing speculation about life and the universe, are the very meaning, the essence of life, and that the complete answer will differ in degree, not in kind. For once man strives to perceive values in the universe, he is on the road towards *creating* those values and thus answering the questions his intelligence propounds. Melville glimpsed this truth. Speaking in *Pierre* (p. 293) of the Plinlimmon pamphlet, he says: "To me it seems more the excellently illustrated re-statement of a problem, than the solution of the problem itself. But . . . such mere illustrations are almost universally taken for solutions (and perhaps they are the only possible human solutions)." In a word, he realized that the problem of evil could never be answered until the question was trenchantly restated in its completest form and most tremendous aspect. This was what he sought to do in his three most important works—*Mardi*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Pierre*: to inscribe with a condor's quill a dramatization of the problem in its "outreaching comprehensiveness of sweep" over time and the universe (*Moby-Dick*, II, p. 220).

In these three books, then, Melville communicated his conception of the ethical cosmos. The experiences recorded in *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Redburn*, and *White Jacket* culminate in *Mardi*, which recapitulates Melville's search among individuals and societies for the rationale of the evil which one man or group of men inflicts upon others. Created in a satirical mood, *Mardi* is a complete world, with its contrasting civilizations, religions, politics, and typical individuals. It might be called Melville's *sociology* of evil. *Moby-Dick* presents in comparison Melville's *metaphysics* of evil. No longer primarily concerning himself with the evil of man towards man, Melville is here occupied with the evil of Nature and God towards man. It is the itinerary of a quest for absolute knowledge of the ethical structure of the universe. His conclusion would seem to be that evil is an integral part of the cosmos itself. There remained but one realm to be explored as a last possible sanctuary against all-encroaching evil—the self. *Pierre*, wherein

he probes the soul of man in a search for ideal virtue, may be regarded as Melville's *psychology* of evil. Here again he finds a dichotomy: man's soul is divided against itself, and in the most idealistic aspirations of man there is the inseparable element of evil. As the sub-title of *Pierre* suggests, this is the final ambiguity.

Needless to say, this general analysis of the three works oversimplifies. Great art does not fit into such neat schemes, and in any one of these three books are contained the ingredients of the others. To mention but one instance: the central idea of *Pierre* is contained in *Mardi*, where Taji is assailed with doubt as to his real motive in rescuing Yillah from the priest. Nevertheless, in their entirety this important trilogy presents the ethical problem in the trinity of Nature, society, and the psyche.

II

Standing on the bare ground, Emerson became "a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all."[5] Clinging to the maintop of a whale-ship, Melville was struck with the inscrutability of the universe. "All visible objects," cries Ahab, "are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! . . . I see in [the white whale] outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the White Whale agent, or be the White Whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him" (*Moby-Dick*, I, p. 204).

At the core of Melville's interpretation of the universe there seems to exist a dichotomy of evil and good, which, without being a solution, admirably manifests the problem, particularly when an imaginative writer gives the flesh of symbolism to the two abstract principles. Religions, such as traditional Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and others, have recognized and used this ethical dichotomy in the form of God and Satan, Ormazd and Ahriman, who epitomize good and evil, light and darkness. By mankind's ethical habit of attributing moral significance to physical phenomena, all natural events, as well as dissensions within the human soul, are ascribed to the temporary victory of one or other of these contending

[5] *Nature*, chap. I.

principles. The result is the anthropomorphism which is seen in God and Satan, or their equivalents. That is, physical events are considered, symbolically or not, as the effects not of natural causes but of the *will* of some higher being, deity or devil. In his literary symbolism Melville follows religion's example, and evolves a doctrine which, using a recurrent word of his own, may be called demonism. This doctrine is applicable both psychologically in the realm of the soul and philosophically in the external universe.

Psychologically, the demonic principle is illustrated by the conflict in Taji's soul between the attraction of the fair, blue-eyed Yillah and that of the dark Hautia; or again by the same situation in *Pierre*, with the fair, blue-eyed Lucy and the dark, electric-haired Isabel. These are, in effect, externalizations of good angels and evil demons, though the actual locale of their conflict is within the mind. But when we consider Babbalanja in *Mardi*, with his mysterious demon-familiar Azzageddi, who speaks with Babbalanja's tongue, we have a better instance of the ethical duality of the soul. A fine example of psychological demonism is to be found also in *Moby-Dick*, in the curious relationship between Ahab and Fedallah. Fedallah differs from Azzageddi in both form and function, since the latter is an integral part of Babbalanja's being and is rather disturbingly profound than evil. Fedallah is a true externalization, but he has not the reality of Isabel, or even of Hautia, since he talks only to Ahab, has no separate interests or feelings, and altogether is as intimate with Ahab and as inseparable from him as his shadow.[6] A symbol of the "darker half" of the human spirit, Fedallah is Ahab's demon-familiar, prompting him to persist in his mad pursuit. After almost surrendering the chase at Starbuck's humane pleadings, Ahab gazed down at the calm sea, "but started back at two reflected, fixed eyes in the water there. Fedallah was motionlessly leaning over the same rail" (II, p. 330). Here Ahab, be it noted, after rejecting the plea of humanity, saw not his own eyes but Fedallah's. Pip, the negro idiot, is the counteracting gentle influence, plucking at the sleeve of Ahab, but unable to win him away from the Parsee. In so far as the ocean also symbolizes the soul—as well as the external universe—the same internal dichotomy is suggested: we are told that the white sea birds are gentle "feminine" thoughts, while beneath the calm

[6]This actual simile is twice used by Melville. See *Moby-Dick*, II, pp. 59, 320.

surface "rushed mighty leviathans, swordfish and sharks; and these were the strong, troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine sea" (II, p. 326).

So much for psychological demonism. A corresponding situation exists in the objective universe. Here we look in vain for the positive forces for good. At best Melville's universe is indifferent to man, the indifference of a passive sea. In the chapter significantly called "The Gilder," the dichotomy is clearly stated in such a sentence as: "These are times of dreamy quietude, when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it" (II, p. 263). The latent destructive powers are tremendous. The white whale is the embodied representative of Nature when it slays with "demoniac indifference." Moby-Dick is considered immortal and ubiquitous, gliding round the world in enticing quietude, "withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw," but finally foaming into an omnipotent rush, with "retribution, swift vengeance, eternal malice," in his whole aspect. The white whale, then, represents essentially the accidental malice of chance, the "personified impersonal" of an omnipotent Yahweh-Satan, the unreasoning[7] brute power of Nature. Melville, in giving us Ahab's conception, gives us his own (I, pp. 229-30): "The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them. . . . That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the East reverenced in their statue devil. . . . All that most maddens and torments; . . . all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable, in Moby-Dick." Ahab here, like most men when they assess a physical phenomenon ethically, finds evil any vast energy which he cannot understand or control.

Melville had no difficulty in perceiving the evil demonism, immanent in the universe or the soul, which found incarnation in the whale or in Fedallah; but the other half of his ethical dichotomy is stunted. There seems to be no God in his universe, unless it is the testy, capricious Jehovah of the Old Testament, working not

[7] In *Moby-Dick*, chap. xx, Melville emphasizes the smallness of the whale's brain and the prodigiousness of its spinal cord, vividly suggesting irrationality.

only good but satanic evil with his own hands. The "prophet Gabriel" pronounced "the White Whale to be no less a being than the Shaker God incarnated; the Shakers receiving the Bible" (II, p. 43). Ahab himself did not consider God and the whale identical, but he affirmed the whale to be the medium through which He worked His will. This is the supreme form of philosophical demonism.

With blind demonic energy rampant in the universe, unchecked by any beneficent deity, and with man's own soul the theatre of a schismatic conflict, is there any room in Melville's ethical world for mankind's faith in free will? In an interesting passage in *Mardi* (II, p. 121) Babbalanja distinguishes between necessitarianism and fatalism: "Fatalism presumes express and irrevocable edicts of heaven concerning particular events. Whereas, Necessity holds that all events are naturally linked, and inevitably follow each other, without providential interposition, though by the eternal letting of Providence." This distinction is of paramount importance: fatalism implies a process towards a predestined end; necessitarianism, a process from an initial cause. The one is miraculous supernaturalism, the other scientific determinism. In their absolute form both, on different premises, deny free will.

Melville favoured necessitarianism,[8] I believe, because he could see no evidence of any final purpose in the universe. He sets forth his view of the complex problem in the chapter entitled "The Mat-Maker" in *Moby-Dick*. Ishmael and Queequeg are weaving a "sword-mat," and the dreamy quiet of the ship leads Ishmael to think he works at the Loom of Time, "a shuttle mechanically weaving away at the Fates. . . . Ay, chance, free will, and necessity

[8]Necessitarianism is, of course, logically inconsistent with demonism. Melville, it must be admitted, never succeeded in reconciling his deterministic metaphysics and demonic ethics. Much of the difficulty, however, is traceable to the use of symbols, which, as often in religions, spring into self-contained existence.

Free will may be reconciled with necessitarianism, as Melville saw, while it cannot with fatalism. For instance, assuming a measure of free will within the frame of necessitarianism, it is possible for a man to act in the present and *causally* influence the effects in the future. If free will means anything it surely means that a man can achieve *results* by willing. But under fatalism one cannot assume any freedom at all, since if the future *effects* are fixed nothing one does in the present can in the least affect the outcome, and free will cannot therefore exist.

—no wise incompatible—all interweavingly working together. The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course . . . ; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events" (I, p. 270). Psychologically, Melville's position seems to amount to this: Nature, opposed or at least indifferent to man's aspirations, nevertheless contains certain elements which fascinate man to the oblivion of aught else. If a man is constituted with the capacity of an Ahab for perceiving profound evil, that fascination can arouse rebellious hatred, and this determines *necessary* responses. As Ahab puts it: "The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run" (I, p. 210; cf. pp. 252-3). Other men may see wealth, pleasure, or other things in life, and correlative reactions necessarily follow. A man is free to pursue that hypnotic object however he pleases—just as, in the fable in *Mardi*, the court fool, Willi, was free to walk on his hands instead of his feet to the commanded tree—but nevertheless pursue he must. In every case, "the ball of free will" is dropped, as we are significantly told, at the sighting of the whale—or its equivalent (*Moby-Dick*, I, p. 270).

To recapitulate, the metaphysical basis of Melville's ethical cosmos may be abstracted in some such fashion as this: there is the realm of external nature, with immense latent power; this appears to man as implacable evil, lurking under a surface of placid beauty; in this world man struggles desperately to erect some purpose, to satisfy some desires, both spiritual and physical. Though chief in his own eyes, man is a relatively insignificant part of this careless universe. On the other hand, man is himself internally divided. There is a dark unknown realm of his being which he is fearful of fathoming; elements in his own nature frighten him. He struggles to integrate his energies, to bend his powers towards ends he thinks good, despite his half-conscious awareness of ambiguities in his own nature which corrupt that good; but all the while he is uncertain whether he is bound or free, agent or principal. Finally, there is a fundamental correspondence between man and the universe; man is "that inner

microcosm, wherein we see the charted universe in little, as the whole horizon is mirrored in the iris of a gnat" (*Mardi*, II, p. 116).

Necessarily regarding himself as the centre of all reality, man sees the world and himself through the lenses of human values—that is, ethically. He sees a fundamental cleavage between light and dark, a polarity between good and evil forces, and these he makes concrete in symbols, both material and spiritual, the better to realize them. Then he seeks an intelligible explanation of this great dichotomy.

This, as I conceive it, was Melville's majestic theme. *Moby-Dick* is the imaginative drama of one who refused to admit anything beyond the scope of human comprehension. "No fearless fool now fronts thee," Ahab cries to the God of the corposants. "I own thy speechless, placeless power; but to the last gasp of my earthquake life will dispute its unconditional, unintegral mastery in me" (*Moby-Dick*, II, p. 281). Thus Ahab asserts the superiority of free intelligence to brute power, but he receives only death as the answer to his arrogant questioning.

III

An author, however, is greater than his creature, and Melville himself eventually achieved a resolution of the problem, although a host of passages seem to confess its utter insolubility. It was only by persisting through a wilderness of failure that he finally sighted the tree of wisdom.

In moments of despair Melville seems to deny any ultimate meaning or value. "Look," says Pierre, "a nothing is the substance; it casts one shadow one way, and another the other way; and these two shadows cast from one nothing; these, it seems to me, are Virtue and Vice" (*Pierre*, p. 382). In his own person (p. 397) Melville writes: "By vast pains we mine into the pyramid; by horrible gropings we come to the central room; with joy we espy the sarcophagus; but we lift the lid—and no body is there!—appallingly vacant as vast is the soul of man!" In *Mardi*, we remember, Yoomy is told that he had seen all when he declared he saw nothing. Similarly in *Moby-Dick* (II, p. 214) Melville tells us of a "bower in the Arsacides" where the god was enshrined in a whale-skeleton, but when he entered he "saw no living thing within; naught was there but bones." The Christian teaching, that in death we shall

know all things, gives Melville no succour. "Death is only a launching into the region of the strange Untried," he writes (II, p. 256). Eternity is but the continuation of time. There is no heaven in the old religious sense—men succeed men forever, and each generation faces the same problems. Even utter defeatism is expressed, as when Isabel says: "I pray for peace,—for motionlessness—for the feeling of myself, as of some plant, absorbing life without seeking it, and existing without individual sensation. . . . I hope one day to find myself drank up into the pervading spirit animating all things."[9]

Not for long, however, could Melville consent to the annihilation of himself as a thinking, intelligent being, nor could he rest content with the "perhaps there is no secret" which he once wrote to Hawthorne. In *Pierre* (pp. 298-9) he seems fumbling for a compromise in the Plinlimmon pamphlet, which under a horological symbolism presents the notion that while most people regulate their lives by practical standards of tradition and custom, there are a few who try to discover the absolute values and to live in accordance with them. The conclusion given at this time is that "in things terrestrial (horological) a man must not be governed by ideas celestial (chronometrical)." The same idea recurs baldly in *Moby-Dick* (I, p. 93): "A man's religion is one thing, and this practical world quite another." This solution—which is merely a pragmatic sanction of a dual morality—contained seeds of comfort for Melville, since he returns to it again in his last novel, *Billy Budd*. Captain Vere, the arbiter in the story, knows that there are two considerations in Billy's situation—the *ideal* moral standard which would exonerate Billy, and the military (or everyday) standard by which he must be condemned. What is this but the restatement of heavenly and earthly time, as suggested in the Plinlimmon pamphlet? But there is also a new factor, and in this lies Melville's final transcendental solution, towards which he had been groping all his life, but apparently never succeeded in expressly formulating. In *Billy Budd* the final solvent is discovered to be love.

In a letter to Hawthorne with reference to *Ethan Brand* Melville says: "The reason the mass of men fear God, and *at bottom dislike* Him, is because they rather distrust His heart, and fancy Him all

[9] *Pierre*, p. 167. Compare Melville's remark to Hawthorne about his own "annihilation," as given in the latter's Journal, quoted above.

brain like a watch."[10] Again, hate-crazed though Ahab is, he yet cries to God: "War is pain, and hate is woe. Come in thy lowest form of love, and I will kneel and kiss thee; but at thy highest, come as mere supernal power; and . . . there's that in here that still remains indifferent. . . . Thou art but my fiery father; my sweet mother I know not. Oh, cruel! what hast thou done with her? There lies my puzzle" (*Moby-Dick*, II, p. 282). At the same time Ahab repels the loyal love of Pip and hardens his heart against his own love for his wife and child (II, pp. 329-30). With his eyes awed by Fedallah's, Ahab could not have recognized the "clear spirit" even if it *had* come in the form of love. The whereabouts of goodness or love—his "sweet mother"—puzzled him to the end; and yet poor Pip, "full of the sweet things of love and gratitude" (II, p. 302; cf. p. 316), was with him constantly.

In *Mardi* (II, p. 371) Babbalanja found contentment in Serenia: "Gone, gone! are all distracting doubts. Love and Alma [Christ] now prevail. . . . I have been mad. Some things there are, we must not think of." And later (p. 374) he adds: "In things mysterious . . . seek no more; but rest content, with knowing naught but Love." This could not content Melville, however. The love that could save him was not a love that supplanted reason, not a love to be reared upon ignorance. Non-illusion is the distinctive characteristic of the resolution in *Billy Budd*. Captain Vere knows profoundly all the elements of human character, both good and evil, without underestimation. His wisdom is complete and sorrowful, but sweetened by the love he has achieved. Billy dies, but his death is transmuted into everlasting life by the love existing between him and Captain Vere.

"All round me," says Melville through the mouth of Babbalanja, "my fellow-men are new-grafting their vines, and dwelling in flourishing arbours; while I am forever pruning mine, till it is become but a stump. Yet in this pruning will I persist: I will not add, I will diminish; I will train myself down to the standard of what is unchangeably true. Day by day I drop off my redundancies" (*Mardi*, II, pp. 80-1). The whale-intoxicated Ahab, similarly, had in his monomania cut away the memory of his wife and child, Starbuck's humane pleadings, Pip's devotion, the quadrant of science, and had denied the very beauty and calm of the ocean

[10]Quoted by R. M. Weaver, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-3.

around him. Thinking he was but stripping his limbs for the fight, he was actually disarming himself of the very weapons which would bring victory. In similar fashion, it seems to me, Melville had long sought the meaning of the universe. He strove to pierce the circle's centre, unthinking that it is in the periphery of man's being that values for him lie—in what he creates in Nature, in the realm of art, society, and spiritual life, in the purposes which he impresses upon the universe—these are what give value both to his own existence and to the universe. Value does not appertain to what man himself or the universe essentially *is*. Mere existence is an empty formula. The love which transmuted Billy's death from a defeat by evil to a triumph over it illustrates how successfully man *can* impose spiritual value upon a mere physical event—illustrates, in a word, how men may impinge celestial time upon terrestrial time. In this respect it is like Christ's crucifixion, since it is in the spiritual interpretation of that event that the values at the heart of Christianity reside.

Melville had admitted that in the web of life the shuttle is free will—and it is the shuttle which creates the pattern. Man is indeed left free to imprint his pattern upon the blackness of the cosmos, free to project significance into insensate energy. But first he must comprehend fully his environment and the materials with which he works. This is what Melville accomplished in his trilogy of evil. But there he worked half-blindly, disavowing the brighter threads, since he was impelled by bitterness of heart. Stubbornly uncompromising, he had contracted his being in an Everlasting No. Not until many years later did he clearly perceive that love and all that this implies—spiritual creation, growth, life itself—could alone give value or human significance to that pattern.

THE WAR: THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS[1]

C. P. Stacey

AS these lines are written, the fourth month of the new World War has just come to an end. The situation has become, in some respects, clearer than it was at the end of September; yet to a generation which thinks of war in terms of 1914-18 it is still bewildering enough. If anyone had doubts about the reality of the conflict, they have been removed. The war is only too genuine; but it is a war of a type which lies outside our immediate experience, the basic conditions under which it is to be fought are only gradually becoming apparent, and nothing could be more foolish than to attempt to predict its future course. The fact that, except in Poland and Finland—weak countries whom powerful aggressors felt safe in assailing with full force—there has been little loss of life by comparison with the initial holocaust of 1914, is so far a fundamental distinction; but this relatively happy situation may not endure.

To record what has passed is easier; yet even here there are difficulties. The great events—so terrible and yet so fascinating—which have taken place in the last few months seem at times to defy classification and interpretation, and the student of affairs may well shrink from the task of evaluating a situation as complex and as fraught with dreadful possibilities as any that has arisen since the fall of Rome. It is not easy for a single eye to comprehend every aspect of so vast a panorama and to distinguish with certainty the significant from the unimportant; yet even a very imperfect chronicle of the last four months of 1939 can hardly fail to have some interest.

I. On the Diplomatic Front

There have been conflicts in the past—our own War of 1812 is an example—in which diplomatic negotiations proceeded *pari passu* with operations in the field, and many wars have been accompanied by intense diplomatic activity designed to strengthen the position of belligerents by the acquisition of allies; but there has probably never been an instance of diplomacy playing quite so large and so significant a role as in the struggle now in progress.

[1]This is the second in a series of articles in which Mr Stacey surveys the course of the War [Editors' note].

The diplomatic activity which has made so many headlines since the beginning of hostilities is in fact merely the continuation of policies adopted at earlier dates. Viewing the matter from this angle, indeed, we must conclude that the war really began, not in September of 1939, but six months earlier, in March. It was on March 15 that Chancellor Hitler, tearing up the Munich agreement of the preceding autumn, sent his troops into Prague and destroyed Czechoslovakia. By that act he likewise destroyed the last vestige of British confidence in him. Mr Chamberlain, who had in effect staked his reputation on Munich as the foundation-stone of permanent peace, was forced to realize that that agreement had merely cleared the way for further unscrupulous aggression; justified by the powerful argument that it was contrary to the principle of self-determination to deny the union with Germany which the Sudeten Germans desired, it had served in practice only to deprive Czechoslovakia of her defences, and to make it possible for Hitler to seize the country when he chose: a temptation which he resisted for only half a year. With the appeasement policy in ruins, his own confidence betrayed, and his countrymen now convinced that only the threat of force would arrest the aggressor, the Prime Minister had no choice but to adopt the Churchill policy of the Grand Alliance; and having adopted it he pursued it with energy and determination, though with only limited success.

Poland had been clearly indicated as the next object of German aggression, by demands made within a week of the occupation of Prague. The Anglo-French guarantee to Poland was announced on March 31, and was followed by commitments to Greece, Rumania, and Turkey. It was universally recognized, however, that, in any question involving Poland, Soviet Russia was all-important; and Britain fell to the task of enlisting her in the new "peace front." The resignation early in May of Maxim Litvinoff, the Soviet foreign commissar who had always claimed to believe in co-operation with the democracies and the League of Nations, was an ill omen, but the negotiations proceeded month after month while the world waited and wondered. In the first week of August, as the European war-season came on, British and French experts went to Moscow to begin military conversations anticipatory of the agreement which was believed to be imminent. Then came the thunderclap: the announcement on August 21, and the signing on August 23, of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact.

Information which the British government has allowed to reach

the public since the Soviet's invasion of Finland indicates that in the course of the summer Germany and the Allies were in effect bidding against each other for Russian support, and that in the end the reckless plungers in Berlin offered the higher price. The price was no less than Russian domination of the upper Baltic, if not of the whole Baltic area. The rock on which the Allies' negotiations foundered was apparently their refusal to traffic in the integrity of the small states on the eastern shores of that sea. It may well be supposed that the Germans were not anxious to give the Communists a free hand in the Baltic, and it seems not improbable that Stalin's acceptance of military conversations with the British and French was simply a piece of diplomatic blackmail designed to bring Hitler round. Presumably the German dictator made the coveted concession some time between July 31, when the announcement of the conversations was made, and August 15, when the German State Secretary, in an interview with Sir Nevile Henderson, "seemed very confident, and professed to believe that Russian assistance to the Poles would not only be entirely negligible, but that the U.S.S.R. would even in the end join in sharing in the Polish spoils." "Nor," adds Sir Nevile, "did my insistence on the inevitability of British intervention seem to move him."[2] Here is the immediate background of the war in a nutshell. In clearing the way for the German attack upon Poland, the rulers of Russia clearly took upon themselves a very large share of responsibility for the catastrophe which instantly followed; yet when all allowance has been made for this encouragement, the fashion in which the German Government persevered in their enterprise in the face of the most solemn Anglo-French warnings still remains almost incredible. Every conceivable expedient was employed by Mr Chamberlain to convince Hitler and his advisers that Britain was acting in grim earnest; and on August 25, at the height of the crisis, Britain and Poland signed a definite Agreement of Mutual Assistance. Nothing had the slightest effect on Hitler; but the consequence was that when the Germans invaded Poland on September 1, and Britain and France fulfilled their pledges by declaring war on Germany

[2] *The British War Blue Book . . . Documents concerning German-Polish Relations and the Outbreak of Hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939* (Cmd. 6106), Toronto, Musson, 1939, p. 93. This collection of official documents is remarkable for Henderson's descriptions of the behaviour of Hitler and his advisers during the crisis.

two days later, no neutral observer had any difficulty in deciding where the responsibility for the conflict lay.

Sir Nevile Henderson has attributed the Germans' heedlessness to a belief implanted in Hitler's mind by his Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, that the British were bluffing and had no intention of going to war. If this be so, Ribbentrop, who has long seemed to many spectators the most profoundly unpleasant of Herr Hitler's singularly unsavoury entourage, is likely to go down in history not merely as a remarkably bad guesser but also as deserving a pretty high rating among the enemies of mankind. That Hitler had misjudged the Allies is certainly suggested by the clumsy attempts made late in September and early in October to prevail upon them to accept the *fait accompli* of the destruction of Poland and make a peace that would afford him leisure to digest his gains—and to guard his fences against his friends in the Kremlin. The total failure of this "peace offensive," the high point of which was the *Führer's* Reichstag speech of October 6, must have been a trifle disillusioning (one can almost sympathize with a dictator who, modestly desiring only a victorious war with one small power, finds himself obliged to fight in addition a war with two great powers which will almost certainly prove fatal to himself); but the "war in earnest" which was proclaimed as the alternative to a peace on Hitler's terms has not yet materialized except in a limited sphere.

As we noted in October, the German-Soviet arrangement was not an unmixed disaster; for when Hitler struck hands with the Communists he administered a severe shock to his partners in the Anti-Comintern Pact and certainly weakened any disposition they might have had to fight in a German cause. This sudden and dramatic occurrence on the very eve of hostilities did, however, have the effect of throwing the whole diplomatic situation into a confusion which has not yet been resolved. The largest question-mark is the aims of Russia: how much support she is prepared to give to Germany, how far (and in what directions) she proposes to go in her own new policy of aggrandizement. But Italy and Japan contribute largely to the general uncertainty; the only thing that can be said with complete assurance about either is that they will be fully alert for opportunities of extracting material advantages for themselves from Europe's present misfortunes. In the case of Italy, it has become increasingly clear that her policy is neutrality; yet she continues to insist that she is still loyal to her military alliance with the Reich, continues to make verbal assaults upon

the democracies (designed, no doubt, to maintain her "nuisance value" and prepare the way for future blackmail), and while obviously hostile to Russia, and in particular to Russian advance in the Balkans, she has refrained from committing herself deeply on this side. As for Japan, she has been bewilderedly trying to construct a policy to replace the one that Hitler blew sky-high in August. She has undoubtedly drawn somewhat closer to Russia; but whether a real understanding is possible between these Far Eastern rivals remains to be seen, and may be doubted. Japan has talked of reprisals over the interference with her shipping resulting from the Anglo-French blockade of Germany, and if her hands were wholly free she would doubtless use this as a pretext, and the European war as an opportunity, to expel Western influence from China. Happily, her hands are not free. She is still at war with a Chinese government which obstinately refuses to collapse; and she does not know what the United States is going to do. In October the American Ambassador, Mr Grew, who had just returned from his own country, said some unusually blunt things about Japan's "disregard of treaties and agreements." The episode suggests the possibility that the United States government proposes to use strong diplomatic pressure to maintain the *status quo* in Eastern Asia and prevent Japan from adopting too adventurous a policy. In the meantime, it is a rather notable fact that Australia, who for years past has been building up a defensive organization much stronger in proportion than Canada's, and has greatly increased it since the outbreak of war, proposes to devote the greater proportion of her resources, for the moment at least, to home defence.

Two very significant successes have been obtained by the Allies: the tripartite Anglo-French treaty with Turkey, signed on October 19, and the repeal of the United States arms embargo, finally effected on November 4 after a full month of Congressional discussion. The latter episode is not a matter of diplomacy (the British government knew better than to try to influence the result) but it materially affected the balance of forces and may conveniently be considered here. The treaty, signed by Turkey in spite of pressure from Germany and Russia, assured the Allies of Turkish support in the event of the war spreading to the Mediterranean area, or of hostilities being undertaken as a result of the Anglo-French guarantees to Rumania and Greece against German aggression. It afforded Italy an additional strong argument for neutrality, and the certainty of Turkish intervention (implying, among other

matters, the opening of the Straits to Allied ships) will undoubtedly tend to prevent the extension of the war into the Balkans, at least by Germany. As for the action of the United States Congress, it was important both as indicating the strong sympathy of Americans for the Allied cause (a factor which was more and more openly acknowledged as the debate proceeded) and as signifying an accession of economic strength to that cause, which may be an important element in deciding the war. The American attitude in general continues to combine this strong sympathy with an equally well-marked determination to keep out of the fight. This latter feeling is represented in the new Neutrality Law by the provision excluding American ships from combat areas—a provision which appears to spell something very like ruin for the United States merchant marine. The combination has not proved easy of comprehension by people abroad who are not acquainted with the strength of American isolationist traditions; and indeed it is not yet certain that it can be maintained indefinitely. Whether the American people will be able to keep their emotions under restraint if the war in Europe assumes a more violent form is the question. It is proper, at any rate, to report that in the circles in which the present writer moves the opinion is general that if the Allies were to sustain serious reverses and appear to be in danger of losing the war, the United States would almost certainly intervene.

As we survey the situation at large, it is clear that the position of the Allies, though greatly complicated and embarrassed by the Russian problem, is in many respects more comfortable than it would have been if the effective German-Italian-Japanese military alliance which was widely anticipated six months ago had really materialized. Britain has not had to worry about the Mediterranean, nor has trouble so far arisen in the Far East; and in view of the fact that the numerical strength of her fleet, while rapidly growing, is still much less than in 1914, this has been a great advantage.

One remarkable feature of the international alignment must not be allowed to pass without at least brief comment: the unity of the British Commonwealth in the crisis. This surprised few informed persons (especially in view of the fact that a cause very powerful in itself tremendously reinforced the appeal of traditional ties) and yet the demonstration, in an Empire more decentralized than that of 1914, was impressive to watch. The neutrality of Eire merely served to emphasize the freedom with which the choice was made

(and it is quite possible that a free, neutral but sympathetic Ireland is a better neighbour for Britain than the dissatisfied and seething island of 1914). The South African Parliament rapidly and quietly turned out General Hertzog and his neutrality policy and brought in General Smuts and co-operation. There was no doubt about the Australasian Dominions. Nor was there any doubt about Canada; everyone in the country knew that the decision of her Parliament was a foregone conclusion, though the fact that King George declared war as King of the United Kingdom on September 3, and as King of Canada only on September 10, is not without its own importance. And it is certainly true that these Dominions, and Canada particularly, are much more powerful communities today than at the outbreak of the last war. As for India, she presents as always a special and a tremendously complex problem. Her nationalist leaders have already shown that they remember the old Irish slogan, *England's extremity is Ireland's opportunity*; nevertheless, they have repudiated, and probably with complete sincerity, the idea of stabbing Britain in the back. Minds much less acute than theirs might perceive that neither the rulers of the Third Reich nor those of Soviet Russia are friends to human freedom.

II. The Destruction of Poland

The first, and in many respects the most tragic, episode of the war was the brief and brutal autumn campaign in which the German army cut the Poles to pieces and the Bolsheviks rushed in to share the spoil. The speed with which the assassination was carried out left the world stunned; this was a true "lightning war." Highly mechanized German columns, aided by an unseasonable drought and obviously executing a plan prepared far in advance, broke through the far-extended Polish lines immediately after the outbreak of hostilities on September 1, and in a week were at the gates of Warsaw. The over-confident defenders of Poland were caught unprepared (their mobilization apparently was never completed); they were largely outnumbered in men and enormously in material; they were demoralized by mass attacks from the greatly superior German air force directed against the country's nerve centres on the first day of the war; and any glimmering hope of a successful rally by the isolated armies that were still fighting desperately at several points was dispelled when the Russians crossed the eastern border on September 17. The last great episode

of the campaign was the twenty-day defence of Warsaw, a piece of hopeless gallantry which drew the admiration of the world and which seems in retrospect the best earnest of the ultimate resurrection of Poland. In this "war of machines against men" the machines won; but their victory may not be permanent.

Russia had borne little of the military burden of the conquest of Poland (later events have suggested that the Red Army might have been unequal to that conquest if forced to undertake it by itself); but she got her full share of the plunder. As early as September 22, while Warsaw still held out, the two aggressors announced that they had agreed on the principles of a new Partition of Poland. The boundary ultimately settled gave Russia a little more than half of Poland's 150,000 square miles. The regions that had been part of Germany before the last war were re-annexed; the remainder of the area assigned to Germany, including the city of Warsaw, was constituted a *gouvernement-général.* The embers of opposition to the new régime were ruthlessly stamped out by the two conquerors. Nothing remained of organized Polish nationality except a government-in-exile in France, a growing army, being formed in the same country, and a few warships which had escaped from the Baltic to operate with the British Fleet.

History has of late shown a tendency to repeat itself, at least in some of its unpleasant phases; and there is a certain gloomy piquancy today in a passage in one of the series of historical handbooks prepared by the British Foreign Office for the Peace Conference of 1919. It explains the downfall of the earlier Polish state in part as follows: "With the exception of the Carpathian range in the south, and possibly the marshes on the east and north-east, Polish frontiers were strategically weak. The central position of Poland made the country liable to simultaneous attacks from different sides. Moreover, Poland was not content with her ethnological frontiers. . . ."[3] The application to 1939 is obvious, and not least on the last point. In the Treaty of Riga of 1921, signed following her defeat of the Bolsheviks, Poland insisted on a boundary which gave her large White Russian and Ukrainian populations in her eastern provinces. Thereby she weakened rather than strengthened herself, and afforded Russia a pretext for attack when the opportunity might arise. In these circumstances, motives of sound permanent policy, as well as of expediency, might well dictate the reluctance which the Allies have shown to commit

[3] *Poland: General Sketch of History, 1569-1815* (London, 1920), p. 17.

themselves to reconstituting Poland's eastern frontiers as they stood at the outbreak of war. It is a question whether it would be practicable to compel Russia to give up her gains, and for the moment at least a Russian war in addition to the existing German one is clearly not good sense; but it is a question also whether in other circumstances it would be a kindness to Poland—or to Europe—to insist on the exact restoration of the *status quo*.

Whatever else the Polish campaign proved, it indicated beyond doubt the formidable character of the new German army. The fight was very unequal, but only a most efficient military machine could have achieved so much in so short a time. Such an army will not be easily defeated, and the events in Poland constitute a standing warning against underrating the enemy.

III. All Quiet on the Western Front

At the outbreak of war enormous armies were mobilized on both sides of the Franco-German border; but no great and bloody campaign such as that of 1914 resulted. The two great fortified zones—the French Maginot Line and the German Westwall—have (so far at least) effectively "frozen" the war on this front. In the beginning, it is true, the French undertook a cautious and limited offensive, invading Germany to a depth of several miles and feeling their way towards the main German positions on the front between the Rhine and the Moselle. The object was to keep large German forces busy in the west and if possible to compel the withdrawal of troops from the Polish theatre. The unexpectedly rapid collapse of Poland deprived this motive of its force, and on September 29, it appears, the French command took the decision to revert to the defensive. In mid-October the Germans attacked, and were allowed to recover (at a price) practically all the German soil which the French had occupied. Since that time the situation has been static, save for a certain amount of activity in the air and constant clashes of patrols.

Mr Hore-Belisha reported, on October 11, that 158,000 British troops, with 25,000 motor vehicles, had crossed the Channel, without any interference by the enemy, to assist the French. The number has presumably increased since that date. Britain has in addition strongly reinforced her troops in the Middle East. The British forces in France have been reported to be largely concentrated on the Belgian border. The report recalls the widespread

conviction that a German offensive in the west, if and when it comes, is likely to be a turning movement through the neutral Low Countries rather than a frontal attack upon the formidable defences of the Maginot Line, which have been strengthened by the construction of new field-works since the outbreak of war. For a tense moment, indeed, it appeared that such an enterprise was to be attempted in the autumn, when in the second week of November a sudden and dramatic offer of mediation from the sovereigns of Holland and Belgium, combined with feverish defensive preparations in those countries and apparent offensive preparations in Germany, seemed to indicate that the stage was being set for it. It is widely believed that the movement was actually ordered, but was countermanded at the last moment. It now seems improbable that very much will happen in the west until spring. Already there are confident predictions of a great German offensive at that time. The present writer himself is unwilling to predict anything about this war; yet it seems clear that the defences of both France and the Low Countries will be much stronger in the spring than they were in the autumn, and a very large British army can by then be in the field. Any territory which Hitler gains in such circumstances will be bought at a very high price.

The war in the air above the Western Front has so far not been fought on a very large scale. The claims of the contending parties concerning the balance of victory in action have been more at variance in the air than in any other field of activity, but the opinion of American correspondents in France appears to be that the Allies have had decidedly the upper hand; and they have taken special pride in the apparent fact that American-made fighting-planes used by the French are superior in practical efficiency to the Germans' best. Possibly the discovery that the German air force had less than the superiority which had been claimed for it has had something to do with its failure to strike the anticipated blows at France and Britain.

IV. Communist Imperialism in the Baltic

Early in October, Mr George Bernard Shaw informed the public that the war was over, and broadly hinted that Russia had won. The war is not over yet, and is unlikely to be over, unfortunately, for some time to come; but it is difficult to deny that in this first phase Stalin has been the chief gainer. The conflict between Hitler

and the Allies (a conflict which he probably hopes will issue in the ruin of both sides) has been for him merely an unparalleled opportunity for aggrandizement, and he has utilized it to seize for "neutral" Bolshevik Russia most of the territories lost as the result of Czarist Russia's participation in the last war. The acquisition of Eastern Poland (including considerable areas which in 1914 belonged to Austria-Hungary) was merely the beginning. Before the ink was dry on the partition agreement, Russia had clapped a pistol to the heads of the three small Baltic states. The developments of 1917-21 had left Russia with only a very narrow outlet to the Baltic—the coastline at the head of the Gulf of Finland adjacent to Leningrad. A fortnight's vigorous "diplomacy" now altered this situation very materially. Between September 29 and October 11, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in rapid succession accepted "mutual assistance pacts" with Russia, which gave her naval and air bases in these countries and the right to maintain garrisons there. The garrisons promptly marched in, and thereafter the independence of the three little states was merely nominal.

It was now the turn of Finland. Delegates from that country arrived in Moscow immediately after the signing of the agreement with Lithuania; but it soon became evident that the Finns were made of sterner stuff. Concessions they were ready to make, but not enough to satisfy the rapacity of the Kremlin, which was demanding, among other things, the demilitarization of the frontier and the leasing to Russia for military and naval purposes of Hangoe, at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland. The negotiations dragged, and finally broke down. The Russians were apparently not unwilling to make an opportunity for conquering the whole country out of hand. On November 26, they asserted that the Finns had fired on Russian troops; a violent press campaign against Finland followed; then, in the face of Finnish attempts at conciliation and a resumption of negotiations, Russia broke off diplomatic relations and, on the morning of November 30, launched her military, naval, and air forces against Finland. That day air raids killed many civilians in Helsinki. In view of the tremendous disparity in strength between the parties, the world in general was not impressed by the Russian claim that the Soviet Union had gone to war to protect itself against Finnish aggression.

During the next few weeks, the military reputation of the Red Army declined rapidly. Attacking a much less powerful adversary than Poland (though under much more difficult condi-

tions of weather and terrain), the Russians failed notably to effect a repetition of the successful German *Blitzkrieg* in that country. The Finns fought with a courage and skill that commanded universal admiration. On the Karelian Isthmus between Lake Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland, the Russians died in thousands in front of the fortified Mannerheim Line without gaining any substantial advantage. Nevertheless, the aggressors' numbers enabled them to attack at many points simultaneously, and the Finns had difficulty in finding sufficient man-power to parry every thrust. After bitter fighting, their narrow corridor north to the Arctic Ocean was closed; and as Christmas came on other Russian columns, driving westward across Finland's narrow central waist, threatened to reach the Gulf of Bothnia and cut the country off from land communication with Sweden. Then, in the last week of the year, Baron Mannerheim, presumably using his exiguous reserves, won a remarkable series of successes on these fronts and recovered much of the lost ground; whether Finland could be conquered, at any rate before the spring, remained an open question. Incidentally, Russian naval forces had suffered heavily in engagements with Finnish coastal batteries, a development of which Germany was unlikely to complain.

This second war, suddenly cropping up alongside the main struggle in the west, produced a diplomatic situation of unexampled complexity. The Scandinavian countries felt themselves directly threatened by the Russian advance, but did not dare go openly to Finland's aid. Germany, now presumably painfully aware of the price she had paid for her Russian pact, nevertheless needed Russian friendship too badly to take any action. The Allies, though they could not afford to drive Russia into military alliance with Germany, were prepared to give Finland economic assistance; and Italy showed a similar disposition. In this crisis the League of Nations, which had remained passive during the earlier events, suddenly came to life. On December 14, the Assembly and Council solemnly expelled Russia from membership, and declared the League prepared to co-ordinate the help which members and non-members might be willing to give Finland. Across the Atlantic, the United States, where public indignation against Russia had run high, was preparing to send supplies to the victim. Many people doubted, however, whether the aid which was being despatched from so many quarters could arrive in time, and whether material without men would be sufficient to save Finland from her fate.

The further course of Russian aggression, if it was to go further, rested a matter of grim conjecture. There was talk of a Soviet advance through Sweden and Norway to the Atlantic—an enterprise certain to throw European diplomatic relationships into still worse confusion. But it was also pointed out that if Finland could be subdued there would be only one considerable area of the Russia of 1914 outside the boundaries of the Russia of 1939: the Rumanian province of Bessarabia. Since the Allies had not guaranteed Rumania against Russia, and since there was also the possibility that Germany's need of oil might drive her into a Rumanian enterprise, the position of King Carol's country was anything but comfortable.

V. Economic and Naval Warfare

The most important and the most active phase of the war in the first four months was the clash of blockade and counter-blockade, which was primarily a matter of naval action. In this sphere the combatants came to close grips immediately. Germany remembered that in 1917 her submarine campaign had come very close to starving Britain out; Britain remembered that her naval blockade had been a very important factor in the German collapse in the following year. On the Allied side, the blockade was now, it seemed, to be the main offensive weapon; conserving their own man-power by standing on the defensive on the Western Front, France and Britain would wear Germany down by economic constriction. Before the end of 1939, the blockade had attained a scope which in the last war took years to develop. Across the seven seas, the vast net of naval power rapidly tightened; once again, "those far-distant, storm-beaten ships, on which the Grand Army never looked," stood between an aggressor and the dominion of the world.

As between this naval war and that of 1914, there was a fundamental difference. Then, Germany had possessed a powerful battle-fleet, capable of issuing out and challenging the Grand Fleet with at least some hope of victory. In 1939 she possessed only two full-sized capital ships ready for action, in addition to her three "pocket battleships"; Britain had fifteen battleships and battle-cruisers. It had been foreseen that in these circumstances Germany's wisest strategy would be to employ the large units of her fleet, especially the fast pocket battleships, in a *guerre de course* against commerce; and this duly materialized. Her first weapon,

however, was the submarine; and in the earliest days of the war her U-boats, obviously placed on the trade-routes in advance of the crisis, took a heavy toll. The rapid organization of a convoy system (the expedient which scotched the menace in 1917) soon reduced the losses, and the submarines themselves began to lose heavily. Seven are believed to have been destroyed in September, and by December 1, the Allies believed that they had cut the submarine fleet with which the Germans had begun the war (in the vicinity of 70 vessels) almost in half. Submarines can be replaced with considerable rapidity; more serious for the Germans is the loss of veteran crews, for the training of submarine personnel is literally a matter of years. In the third week of November a new phase of the German war against merchant shipping began, when mines (some of them at least of a new magnetic type, and some laid by aircraft) began to destroy large numbers of vessels; this twelfth week of the war saw the destruction of 28 Allied and neutral merchantmen, as compared with 16 in the first week, previously the largest total. This menace too was met, by the employment of a large fleet of trawler mine-sweepers and by stringent patrol measures directed against mine-layers by air and by sea; and losses soon fell off again. A month after the beginning of the mine campaign, what may perhaps be considered a third phase set in, with widespread attacks by German aircraft against merchant vessels, particularly fishing trawlers and other small craft; the losses occasioned, however, were apparently not especially important. According to the computation of the *New York Times*, the total losses from all causes to Allied and neutral merchant shipping, from September 3 to January 1 inclusive, amounted to 785,823 tons. When it is recalled that in one month at the height of the 1917 campaign the Germans sank 849,000 tons, the comparative ineffectiveness of their effort so far is clear. In the absence of some new development which cannot at present be anticipated, the attempted blockade of Britain appears to be a failure.

The British blockade of Germany is a different matter, though it can be expected to make its full effect felt only gradually, and it is still too early to determine how far it may be offset by economic aid to Germany from Russia. Goods of all sorts moving towards Germany fell under the ban from the beginning (which was not the case in the last war, when the real blockade began only in March, 1915); and by way of retaliation for the mine warfare German exports were also proscribed at the end of November. This led to

neutral protests, but no actual reprisals have been attempted up to the time of writing. As for enemy merchant shipping, it has been swept off the sea, just as in 1914. Large numbers of German vessels took refuge in neutral ports at the outset of hostilities; a considerable number of these have since slipped away to sea, but most of them have either fallen into Allied hands or have been scuttled to avoid capture; German seaborne trade, except in the Baltic, has simply ceased.

The lot of a blockading fleet is hard in many respects. Its work is tedious and largely undramatic, and its influence upon the outcome of hostilities, however important, is exerted silently and unostentatiously. The enemy possesses the initiative, and, if at all enterprising, he can use it to inflict losses upon the blockaders. And in the early stages of the present war the Royal Navy suffered a series of misfortunes which, while not affecting its command of the sea and the situation, were damaging to prestige. The worst of these were the sinking of the old but useful air craft-carrier *Courageous* (September 17); the destruction of the battleship *Royal Oak* by a German submarine in the waters of the Scapa Flow base, generously and truly termed by Mr Churchill "a remarkable exploit of professional skill and daring" (October 14); the sinking of the armed merchant cruiser *Rawalpindi* by the vastly superior gun-power of the pocket battleship *Deutschland* and another vessel near Iceland (November 23); and the double escape of the German liner *Bremen*, which managed to get from New York to Murmansk in September, and from Murmansk to Bremerhaven in December. This last episode was the subject of caustic comment by civilians who did not stop to reflect upon the utter impossibility of maintaining an airtight sea blockade. On its heels, however, came a series of incidents which showed the Navy in a different light.

We now know that the pocket battleship *Admiral Graf Spee* left Germany previous to the outbreak of war for a career of commerce destruction. In the three and a half months that followed she sank nine British steamers (a total of 50,089 tons): a record which compares unfavourably with the capture or destruction of twenty-one by the weaker *Emden* in 1914. Then, on December 13, twenty-five years and five days after the Battle of the Falkland Islands, in which the squadron commanded by the officer for whom she was named was destroyed by British battle-cruisers, she encountered the faster but much less powerful British cruiser *Exeter* off the coast of Uruguay. An action began, in which the *Exeter* was joined by

the small cruisers *Ajax* and *Achilles*, all three together throwing a weight of metal much inferior to the *Spee*'s. The *Exeter*, heavily hit by the enemy's 11-inch guns, dropped out; but the two other vessels, "both risking more than seemed credible," the German captain was reported to have said afterwards, fought on, making skilful use of smoke screens and their superior speed. Once, according to one report, they got within a mile of the German and at this very close range inflicted heavy damage with their 6-inch armament. In the evening the *Spee* took refuge in the neutral harbour of Montevideo, and there the little cruisers blockaded her. They were reinforced by the 10,000-ton cruiser *Cumberland*, but apparently the reports of the arrival of heavier ships, which circulated widely, were not true. The Uruguayan authorities, after inspecting the *Spee*, gave her seventy-two hours in which to repair her damage and get to sea. As the time-limit expired on the afternoon of December 17, the pocket battleship got up her anchors and left the harbour; but not to renew the fight. Five miles out, in the River Plate, her crew abandoned her and blew her up. This action was said to have been taken on Hitler's personal orders, and the suicide of Captain Hans Langsdorff was interpreted as a protest against the order to destroy his ship rather than take the chance of battle. The whole episode, an almost incredible piece of marine melodrama, enhanced the fighting reputation of the Royal Navy and certainly shook that of the German service.

Assuming apparently that the *Spee*'s presence would draw all available British naval forces to the South Atlantic, the 32,000-ton German liner *Columbus*, the third-largest vessel in the German merchant fleet, seized the opportunity to slip out of the harbour of Veracruz and attempt to emulate the feat of the *Bremen*. She failed. On December 19, a British destroyer came up with her and her captain scuttled and burned her to avoid capture. A few days earlier it had been reported that the submarine *Ursula* had sunk a German cruiser in the mouth of the Elbe and that the submarine *Salmon* had destroyed a German submarine and damaged two cruisers in the North Sea. But perhaps the most impressive evidence of Britain's unshaken command of the sea was revealed by Mr Churchill on December 18, when he told the public that the First Canadian Division had arrived in Scotland without the slightest interference by the enemy. Contrary to the gloomy predictions of many croakers, it was evident that the Royal Navy's control

of the sea-lanes was as absolute as in 1914; and the revelation was an ill omen for Germany.

VI. Some Tentative Conclusions

As we inspect the purely military elements of the general situation, it seems clear in the light of the facts just rehearsed that "the influence of sea power upon history" is being felt today as strongly as ever; and while it is still perhaps a little early to be dogmatic, there is no evidence that the advent of the much-discussed air weapon has shaken that influence materially. Nor has it had the effect upon the course of the war on land which was so widely predicted. The fashion in which the great powers involved have refrained from bombing each other has been the subject of much discussion and speculation; and it is pretty generally agreed that it is primarily the fear of retaliation that has made Hitler hold his hand. Apparently the air weapon is a terrible force in the hands of a great power attacking a small one; but the great power is afraid to use it against a country possessing a large air force of its own, for fear of the fate that may befall the great power's own cities. Let us not too easily assume, however, that the cities of Western Europe are to be immune from air bombardment throughout this struggle. It was expected to be the first card in Hitler's hand; it may well be the last.

The influence of fortification is one of the great facts that seem to emerge from a study of these past four months. The great systems of fortifications (combined, it is true, with considerations of policy) have prevented any real campaign on the Western Front; and it would appear that the Finns' prepared works have been a large element in checking the Russian attack, just as the absence of such works facilitated the German conquest of Poland. One cannot help thinking a trifle wistfully of that "Little Maginot Line" in the mountains of Czechoslovakia, which was handed over to Hitler without a fight in the autumn of 1938.

To the student of the past, it is a matter of interest to see some of the ancient permanencies of European history re-asserting themselves in the present crisis. The efficiency of Germany's army, and the inefficiency of Russia's, have both been in evidence once again; and if it is difficult to discover an exact historical parallel for Adolf Hitler, there is a certain grim humour in the fashion in which the Bolsheviks have made themselves the heirs of the old expansionist

policy of the Romanoffs. During September and October Josef Stalin gave a remarkably successful double impersonation of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. Whether his imitation of Alexander I (who, it will be recalled, added both Finland and Bessarabia to the Russian dominions) will go down equally well is still a matter of conjecture; but he has already done enough to justify the reflection that new Commissar is but old Czar writ large.

In Germany there has been nothing even approximating to the internal breakdown which certain optimistic people had looked forward to; for the famous "beer-hall bombing" in Munich is far too enigmatic an episode to argue from. However widespread the discontent in Germany, it is unlikely to produce practical results except after military reverses or serious and prolonged hardships resulting from the blockade. The disorders in Prague in November, which were so harshly suppressed by the Czechs' German masters, suggest that sooner or later Hitler will have serious trouble with the peoples whom he has enslaved; but this too is unlikely to happen until German power is shaken elsewhere. But if military and economic force are necessary to the destruction of Hitlerism, we must not forget that moral force may also play a tremendous part. Nothing would contribute more effectively to this end than the diffusion in Germany of the conviction that the Allies are fighting, not for the conquest and dismemberment of the Reich, but for a just and generous settlement which will ensure the permanent peace of Europe. To this object the Allies are now committed. On November 26, in answer to widespread demands for clarification of their war aims, Mr Chamberlain, speaking over the radio, laid down "the broad principles" on which they would desire to found a settlement: "Our desire . . . would be to establish a new Europe, not new in the sense of tearing up all the old frontier posts and redrawing the map according to the ideas of the victors, but a Europe with a new spirit in which the nations which inhabit it will approach their difficulties with good-will and mutual tolerance." In such a Europe, he said, fears of aggression would have ceased; adjustments of boundaries would be threshed out around a table; there would be "a full and constant flow of trade between the nations"; and "each country would have the unfettered right to choose its own form of internal government so long as that government did not pursue an external policy injurious to its neighbours." Armaments would be reduced. Some sort of international machinery would have to be provided to make such a system work, and

the Prime Minister expressed the hope "that a Germany animated by a new spirit might be among the nations which would take part in its operations."

Such are the aims for which the British Empire is fighting. Such, it may be added, is the sort of settlement which every British interest dictates. Nevertheless, forces are already at work both in Canada and in Britain which would make such a settlement impossible. We are being told that the present situation is the result, not of policies and circumstances which might have been and ought to have been altered, not of the influence of a group of degenerate leaders whom those policies and circumstances helped to place in power in Germany, but of something inherently and permanently bad in the German people as a whole. The only possible deduction from this is that the German people must be either annihilated or perpetually enslaved; and since we cannot either annihilate or enslave 80,000,000 people, it would seem wiser not to think in such terms. The wise citizen who really desires to free the world from war will do his utmost to resist this sort of hysteria. He will remember that we are now eating the bitter fruit of twenty years of wasted opportunity, and will insist that no attempt be made to set things right by merely making the old mistakes on a grander scale.

MATTHEW ARNOLD AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

E. K. Brown

CRITICISM, as Arnold conceived it, fastened primarily on great men and great works. But the estimate of Arnold's criticism has rested too heavily upon what he has said of such men and such works: attention has been withdrawn from his many fruitful generalizations on the connection between an individual writer and the age in which he lives, the tradition to which he subscribes, the movements against which he rebels. To think in terms of movements was by no means alien to Arnold's mind: whenever he occupied himself, as he often did, with works of secondary worth or with writers incompletely expressive, he set in the foreground the definition and estimation of movements. Much of his most illuminating criticism is found in passages where movements are his over-riding interest.

Every reader of his essays knows that he thought of certain ages as simultaneous climaxes in civilization and in literature; and that he thought the Romantic movement, for all its splendour, a failure. What he persistently complains of in Romantic literature —its defective knowledge of books and life, its subordination of thought to feeling, and of the universe to the self—he ascribes to the shortcomings of the Romantic age. The thought and culture of Romantic England centred, he believed, in the revolutionary ideal, that is, in such men as Godwin and Hazlitt, Priestley and Paine. None of these struck him as an interesting mind; he rarely speaks of them; and it is not unlikely that he judged the rest as harshly as Godwin of whom he remarked: "Des courants actuels qui nous portent aucun ne vient de lui." The revolutionary ideal itself Arnold found unimpressive, deriving from a current of feeling and action, and in consequence "setting quiet culture back."

In its general features such an estimate of Romanticism and the Romantic age would satisfy the ghost of Dr Johnson; and indeed most of Arnold's interpreters, emphasizing the severity with which Arnold reproves Romanticism, have set before us a figure almost neo-classic in his temper and aesthetic. To think of Arnold in that way is an error: no one can read his essays on the great Romantic poets, or even his incidental references to them, without being aware that currents of sympathy are flowing. Some account of Arnold's judgments of the English eighteenth century,

its poets and essayists, its style and temper, may prevent improper inferences from Arnold's indictment of Romanticism.

I

The period from 1660 to 1800 seemed to Arnold to have exhausted most of its literary energy and tact in one great achievement: the formation of an admirable prose style. It is astonishing that in his introduction to Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, in an edition intended for use in schools, his stress falls heavily upon the prose style of the eighteenth century. He must have known that to the readers for whom the book was printed Johnson's approach to poetry would be disturbing; but nowhere in his introduction does he either join battle with Johnson or suggest what common ground in judging poetry might exist for a Victorian student and "our foremost man of letters of the eighteenth century." Instead, his talk is of the elements and history of good prose style. He quotes with approval Burnet's account of the transformation of prose at the Restoration: "The King had little or no literature, but true and good sense, and had got a right notion of style; for he was in France at the time when they were much set on reforming their language. It soon appeared that he had a true taste. So this helped to raise the value of these men [Tillotson and others] when the king approved of the style their discourses generally ran in, which was clear, plain, and short." The last phrase struck fire on such a lover of critical formulae as Arnold; and all that remained was to find an explanation in social terms for the sudden emergence in Charles II's time of the first English prose idiom appropriate to civilized communication. Arnold supplies a simple-seeming explanation: a good prose idiom originates, he says, in "a people's growth in practical life, and its native turn for developing this life and for making progress in it." France had such a "turn," he believes, and accordingly anticipated England (and Germany) in forming a sound prose idiom. Why England developed one in the later part of the seventeenth century he does not clearly say: he leaves us to suppose that a combination of French influence and a maturing in practical life led the English to reject the old style, "long and heavy," as Burnet calls it, and to evolve the new style, clear, plain, and short.

Of this new style Addison is the most accomplished example: he is "Attic"; his idiom is "classical English, perfect in lucidity, measure and propriety," an exquisite organ, committed unfortunately to a mind which had nothing of importance to express.

Johnson shared Addison's mastery of the qualities essential to good prose, whatever superficial peculiarities stained his writing: if his words were "pompous and long," his structure was plain and "decidedly modern." About the style of Burke, whom he thought the greatest figure in the age's literature, Arnold had serious misgivings. He combed Burke's writings for sentences displaying that author's fiery and vital style in its most ludicrous extremes: he lit on the saying that Rousseau "casts away, as a sort of offal and excrement, the spawn of his disgustful amours," and that other miscreants used the royal name "as a sort of navel-string, to nourish their unnatural offspring from the bowels of royalty itself." Such prose deserves Arnold's harshness: it is "extravagant," "barbarously rich and overloaded," "Asiatic," "provincial." In such epithets Arnold is attacking not merely Burke, however, but the Romantic tradition in English prose, alive in his own time in Carlyle, Ruskin, and Kinglake: taken with Arnold's estimate of Elizabethan prose such attacks indicate—and indeed this was Arnold's opinion—that the eighteenth century was the one age in which English writers had expressed themselves in an ideal prose idiom.

II

In his approach to the great minds of the century, Arnold drew a decisive distinction between those expressive of the tendencies prevailing in the period and those weakened in their deepest possibilities by living in a time and place hostile to their full development. Among the latter were Gray and Butler, to both of whom Arnold was intimately attracted. Among the purely Augustan minds only one left an impress on Arnold: and even Johnson was to him an alien, about whom his remarks lack the subtlety and insight which characterize Arnold's important criticism.

Apart from his observations on Johnson's style and its place in the development of a good prose, what Arnold says of him is wretchedly vague. He is a "man of letters of the first class, and the greatest power in English letters during the eighteenth century"; "he is a great and original man" who improves on acquaintance—the better we know him the more we shall respect "the power of his mind, the width of his interests, the largeness of his knowledge, the freshness, fearlessness and strength of his judgments." Anyone who knows Arnold's approach to those writers of prose who really engage his thought and shape his soul, will miss in these phrases

the note in which Arnold defines and praises them. He thought Johnson important; but he did not intimately feel his importance as he felt that of Joubert, Emerson, or Bishop Butler.

Yet of all purely Augustan writers it was Johnson who mattered most to him. The principal achievement in prose of the century, apart from the development of a style, was in fiction; and to Arnold the novel meant very little. He has written but one critique of a novelist, a study of Tolstoy in which the stress falls less on fiction than on the ideas expressed in the author's autobiographical and polemical works. Arnold read eighteenth-century novels, as we know from his letters and note-books; but when he refers to them it is simply to recall a clever phrase or the name of a heavily-typed character.

It is not so easy to explain his indifference to the essay on manners and morals. Essays commenting in a noble style on the chief issues of character and social life, and driving at practice, interested him when written by Bacon or Emerson. The failure of the eighteenth-century essay to interest him is clear in his account of Addison's intelligence. There is an acerbity in his references to Addison quite absent from all his dealings with other authors of the age. Addison's claim to leading rank as a moralist cannot be honoured: he lacks "the force of ideas of moralists of the first class"; he has not even "the best ideas attainable in or about his time," such ideas as La Bruyère or Vauvenargues had; he has no command of "power, searchingness or delicacy of thought." He is perfectly "trite and barren." It is not too much to say that Arnold pursued Addison with the contempt which he usually reserved for charlatans contemporary with himself, men like Bishop Wilberforce or Mr Roebuck: in the strict sense in which Arnold used the term he believed that Addison was a charlatan, that is a man deluding his readers into thinking that what he said was of supreme importance and interest when it was utterly commonplace. Such intellectual and spiritual hollowness he finds in the eighteenth-century essay as a type.

For Swift Arnold felt respect without interest. After saying that it was no great loss that Addison was no longer read, he went on to say that to forgo acquaintance with Swift was to sustain a loss that "no conversance with contemporary prose literature can make up." His one real debt to Swift was, however, the phrase "sweetness and light"; and even when incurring that debt he could not resist saying that "of one of the two" Swift himself "had all too little."

Arnold was seldom the victim of infatuation; but the few readers of *Culture and Anarchy* who have picked up a copy of the *Maxims of Piety and Christianity* must have felt that only infatuation could explain the reverence Arnold expresses for that work and its author, Thomas Wilson, who was Bishop of Sodor and Man from 1697 to 1755. To the work Arnold's attention was drawn by an article of Keble's, appearing in the *Quarterly* in 1866; taking away from Fox How his father's copy of the *Maxims*, he immediately pronounced Wilson's book "delightful and just the sort of book I like," and launched a campaign to have it reprinted and to make its author one of the masters of English moral practice. He allows us to glimpse the reason why he so valued the book. It is a collection of *pensées*, the kind of prose Arnold most warmly admired. In such a collection he felt a sense of intimacy with his author which was impossible in a more formal work. He would gladly have exchanged a whole library of sermons, public devotions, theological treatises, and apologetic tracts, for one excellent collection of detached thoughts.

Do the *Maxims* make a collection of such excellence? Let us take two sentences from them, one copied into Arnold's note-book in 1868, the other in 1883. The first is: "God grant that I may do so; and I pray God preserve me from ease, idleness, and trifling away my precious time"; the second, "Let us not afflict ourselves with our failings; our perfection consists in opposing them." The substance of these sentences agrees with Arnold's religious and moral beliefs and practice: he felt prone to idle and trifle, and he objected to that tendency in Christianity to wallow in a sense of sinfulness, rather than exert oneself in overcoming one's sins. Scores of pious writers have made similar pleas; in neither of them is there any element of unique perception or brilliant insight. These, and all the other quotations he made from Wilson fail to substantiate that note of almost unqualified praise which sounds in the preface to *Culture and Anarchy* and in other parts of Arnold's moral prose. One cannot discern in any of the quotations "a sample of the very best, perhaps, which our nation and race can do in the way of religious writing"; one cannot perceive how any of them is "far more solid" than the *Imitation of Christ;* one cannot see how any of them combines "ardour, unction, honesty and good sense" in their "fulness and perfection."

At no time in speaking of Wilson does he specifically urge, as he was to urge in his appreciations of Gray and Butler, that the period was one in which even the finest intuitions and imaginations

withered and twisted. He appears not to have seen Wilson in any clear temporal context but rather to have placed him in the timeless company of Isaiah and Joubert. He calls him a "survivor of the saints." Surely this is an example of that "personal estimate" which Arnold feared in others, the estimate in which "we overrate the object of our interest, and apply to it a language of praise which is quite exaggerated" simply because the object has a peculiar relevance to "our personal circumstances." Those personal circumstances were the need for an undogmatic and unecstatic religion and an ethic modestly practical and quietly disinterested.

The other eighteenth-century bishop to whom Arnold steadily refers, he had studied at a much earlier date. The *Sermons on Human Nature* were, with Aristotle's *Ethics*, the main text in moral philosophy in Arnold's undergraduate days. He recalls, as he approaches the analysis and evaluation of Butler, the superstitious regard in which these sermons were then held, it being assumed that they were infallible and that if they presented any appearance of incompleteness or inconsistency a closer study and a sharper mind would establish their perfection. To understand Arnold's estimate of Butler, it must be remembered that it springs in part from his dislike of the Oxford approach, from his conviction that every interpretation of religion and morality should be subjected to what he termed verification, that is, confirmation by the experience of the reader. Even the ideas of Paul and of Christ Himself Arnold ruthlessly tries by this criterion. This fundamental belief of Arnold's is ignored in Mr Ernest Mossner's account of Arnold's judgment in his *Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason:* what strikes Mr Mossner is that unlike most Victorians Arnold "attacks alike the *Sermons* and the *Analogy*." What is really significant is not the extent of Arnold's attack, a reaction against his enslavement as an undergraduate, but his praise.

There is his praise of Butler the man, who "stood alone in his time and among his generation." Strong as his spiritual sense was, Butler falls short of the note of sanctity because of his misfortune in the time of his birth. Butler in the guise of a saint and fine spirit *manqué* haunts Arnold, who returns to this conception in speaking of Gray's spiritual loss in living in "the somewhat arid air of the eighteenth century":

> Coming when he did, and endowed as he was, [Gray] was a man born out of date, a man whose full spiritual flowering was impossible. The same thing is to be said of his great contemporary Butler, the author of the *Analogy*. In the sphere of religion, which touches that of poetry, Butler was impelled by the

endowment of his nature to strive for a profound and adequate conception of religious things which was not pursued by his contemporaries, and which at that time and in that atmosphere of mind, was not fully attainable. Hence in Butler too as in Gray: "great labour and weariness, great disappointment, pain, and even vexation of mind." A sort of spiritual east wind was at that time blowing; neither Butler nor Gray could flower.

An eighteenth-century saint, an eighteenth-century personality with spiritual fragrance, seemed to Arnold an impossibility; but he thought that when one fell among the Philistines it was a distinguished virtue to seek the values to which the Philistines were blind, even if one could never attain them.

In Butler's attitude to life Arnold found much to admire. He admired above all the vindicator of the right of reason in religion and the sober critic of such physical excitement as the enthusiasts of the time approved. Butler seemed to him the opposite of Wesley, on whom all Arnold's comments are hostile, ranging from the mild contempt of the phrase "this amiable and gracious spirit, but intellectually slight and shallow compared to Paul, beat his wings in vain"—an unnoticed prelude to the famous description of Shelley—to the severity of the final judgment, "a mind of the third order." Above all Arnold valued Butler's high seriousness, his largeness of mind and soul, diffused through all his writing and most marked in "a fragment or two,—memoranda for his own use,—which are among the last things that his pen wrote before death brushed it from his hand for ever." It is typical of Arnold's Emersonian delight in particular insights, and his no less Emersonian suspicion of logical formulations, that he put such *pensées* above the *Analogy* and even the *Sermons*.

Burke, greater than Butler, was not, in Arnold's opinion, fully an eighteenth-century figure. He belongs to the history of English politics and political thought; and in those domains the eighteenth century came to an end in 1789. Above all else what Arnold admired in Burke was his wisdom in Irish affairs and his method of judging the French Revolution. It is astonishing that Arnold should praise a thinker who was bitterly anti-rational, proudly insular, and often incurious as to the right data. Such defects in Burke Arnold clearly saw:

> It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event; as the eloquent but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded and his observation therefore at fault; but on the whole, and for those who can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes those

writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth; they contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its resistance rational rather than mechanical.

That last sentence begins to suggest what, despite his heavy deductions, Arnold admired in Burke: his need and power to judge events and persons in terms of ideas. It is to be remembered that Arnold's conception of culture was twofold: the man of culture must recognize two obligations—to strive to possess the best ideas, and to strive to make his ideas prevail. If Burke did not always strive to possess the best ideas, sometimes ignoring data, appealing to unanalysed notions, confusing emotions with thoughts, at least he sought to make ideas prevail. "Burke's paramount and undying merit as a politician (and one might add as a political writer) is that instead of accepting as fatal and necessary this non-thinking condition of ours, he battles with it, mends and changes it; he will not rest until he has put people in a mood, a little unusual with them," until he has "set them thinking." Burke made good ideas, if not the best, prevail.

Still, in his approach to the problem of Ireland he is rather apart from his time, and grounds himself on special and personal knowledge; and in his approach to the problem of the French Revolution he is of the Romantic age, rather than the eighteenth century. Arnold conceives of him as representing much better than the Romantic revolutionaries, the best political thought of the Romantic movement in England.

III

No phrases in Victorian criticism are better known than those in which Arnold stamps Dryden "the puissant and glorious founder," and Pope "the splendid high priest," of "our age of prose and reason, our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century," and the two jointly, "not classics of our poetry . . . , classics of our prose." Gray alone is exempted from a blanket condemnation of one hundred and forty years in English poetry. In *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, a discourse which follows with superficial fidelity the line of Arnold's main attack on eighteenth-century poetry, A. E. Housman asserts that critics in Arnold's time set a low value on the poetry of the century before "not because it differed in kind from [the poetry of their own age] but because it differed in quality, as [the poetry of their own age] did not differ from the poetry of all those ages, whether modern or ancient, English or foreign,

which are acknowledged as the great ages of poetry." Only when the poetry of the period kept close to the ground, did they admit its value—the value of good prose. Such an account, applicable perhaps to late Victorian critics, furnishes an incomplete and even highly misleading interpretation of Arnold's severity to the work of Dryden, Pope, and their followers.

Nowhere has Arnold elaborated his objections; he has merely launched thunderbolts and dropped suggestive hints. He says that the eighteenth century's mode of handling nature is purely conventional; and quotes a line from Pope which could scarcely be more remote from original, intimate handling of nature:

> As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night . . . .

He is repelled by poetic diction and finds in his favourite Gray such indefensible lines as:

> Thy joys no glittering female meets,

or

> He gave to misery all he had—a tear;
> He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

He insists that the general poetic manner of the period is fundamentally prosaic; and in support of his opinion adduces the opening lines of *The Hind and the Panther:*

> A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns and in the forest ranged.

and Pope's couplet:

> To Hounslow Heath I point, and Banstead Down;
> Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own.

However fairly the former passage may represent the average of Dryden's music and diction, in the last example there is much less the accent of Pope than of Byron, or even of Browning. Pope's characteristic deficiencies have no relation to roughness or tunelessness such as it exemplifies. If the choice of such an example was not unscrupulous it can be explained only as a reflection of complete inability to perceive the musical quality of the heroic couplet.

For such an explanation there is some ground in Arnold's confessed insensitiveness to the French alexandrine. In his essay on Heine he takes as an example of the defects of French verse:

> Ah, que me dites-vous, et que vous dit mon âme?
> Que dit le ciel à l'aube et la flamme à la flamme?

M. Legouis who, in his *Defense de la poesie française*, protested against the example, conjectured that it was one of Hugo's weaker

uses of antithesis and rhetoric: it comes, as M. Louis Bonnerot has discovered, from the very minor Romantic poet Eugenie de Guérin. Arnold subsequently confessed that he was indifferent both to Hugo and to the classical poetry of the seventeenth century; and that to him the alexandrine seemed a poor measure when compared either with blank verse or the hexameter. What difference was there then between the poetic manner of Eugenie de Guérin and that of Victor Hugo himself?

In the very passage in which he speaks against the alexandrine he goes on to criticize our heroic couplet:

> The same may be said of our own poets of the eighteenth century, a century which gave them as the main vehicle for their high poetry a metre inadequate (as much as the French alexandrine, and nearly in the same way) for this poetry,—the ten syllable couplet. It is worth remarking, that the English poet of the eighteenth century whose compositions wear best and give one the most entire satisfaction,—Gray,—hardly uses that couplet at all: this abstinence, however, limits Gray's productions to a few short compositions, and (exquisite as these are) he is a poetical nature repressed and without free issue. For English poetical production on a great scale, for an English poet deploying all the forces of his genius, the ten-syllable couplet was, in the eighteenth century, the established, one may almost say the inevitable, channel. Now this couplet, admirable (as Chaucer uses it) for story-telling not of the epic pitch, and often admirable for a few lines even in poetry of a very high pitch, is for continuous use in poetry of this latter kind inadequate. Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, is thus at a disadvantage compared with Lucretius in his poem on Nature: Lucretius has an adequate vehicle, Pope has not. Nay, though Pope's genius for didactic poetry was not less than that of Horace, while his satirical power was certainly greater, still one's taste receives, I cannot but think, a certain satisfaction when one reads the Epistles and Satires of Horace, which it fails to receive when one reads the Satires and Epistles of Pope. Of such avail is the superior adequacy of the vehicle used to compensate even an inferiority of genius in the user! In the same way Pope is at a disadvantage as compared with Addison: the best of Addison's composition (the "Coverley Papers" in the *Spectator*, for instance) wears better than the best of Pope's because Addison has in his prose an intrinsically better vehicle for his genius than Pope in his couplet.

A critic so strongly averse from the heroic couplet might, perhaps, be so entirely insensitive to Pope's music as to exemplify it in the lines about Hounslow Heath and Banstead Down. It is significant that among Dryden's poems the only one of which Arnold speaks warmly is *Alexander's Feast*, "this incomparable ode, the mighty son of his old age," as, in the preface to *Merope*, it is called; and even in this poem, written in a measure so far removed from the heroic couplet, Arnold finds the rhythm defective and attributes the defect to an ear and a taste ruined by the prevalence of the heroic couplet. The answer to the question raised by Housman is

not as simple as Housman might wish: it is that Arnold condemns the poetry of the eighteenth century because at a crucial point his taste is narrow, so narrow that he is quite incapable of appreciating the difference between success and failure in the use of the couplet.

Gray alone in the age of prose and reason won through to occasional utterance in genuine poetry: "he is the scantiest and frailest of classics in poetry, but he is a classic." It is not the *Elegy* that leads Arnold to except Gray from his condemnation of the century: although Arnold admits it to be a "beautiful poem" he is impatient of the "unmeasured and unbounded praise" it has received. It is on *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poesy* that Arnold rests his case for Gray. In one of the few critical notes in his edition of Johnson's *Lives* he observes: "Johnson is seen at his worst in his criticism of 'the two Sister Odes'; but it is instructive to read him on Gray and to weigh for oneself the value of what he says. Gray's 'Progress of Poesy' gives with admirable skill a poetical history of poetry; his 'Bard' gives with like skill a poetical history of England." The stress on skill is reiterated in an aside in the essay on Emerson:

> Gray holds his high rank as a poet, not merely by the beauty and grace of passages in his poems; not merely by a diction generally pure in an age of impure diction: he holds it above all by the power and skill with which the evolution of his poems is conducted. Here is his grand superiority to Collins, whose diction in his best poem, the "Ode to Evening" is purer than Gray's; but then the "Ode to Evening" is like a river which loses itself in the sand, whereas Gray's best poems have an evolution sure and satisfying.

Skill in the evolution of a poem is not a quality that many would deny to Dryden, or to the poetry of the period in general. Yet it is the only quality that Arnold mentions in support of his exemption of Gray from the censures he utters against the poetry of the period.

His other remarks in praise of Gray are vague. His essay on Gray is primarily a portrait; apart from the description of Gray's personality it merely tells us of the harm done his genius by the age in which he lived. "Born in the same year with Milton, Gray would have been another man; born in the same year with Burns, he would have been another man. A man born in 1608 could profit by the larger and more poetic scope of the English spirit in the Elizabethan age; a man born in 1759 could profit by that European renewing of men's minds of which the great historical manifestation is the French Revolution." It is the same regret voiced in Arnold's account of Bishop Butler.

IV

"I am glad you like Gray; that century is very interesting, though I should not like to have lived in it." In this comment, in a letter written in 1880, emerges the root of Arnold's dissatisfaction with the period and of his failure to understand it. He would have been happy living in Periclean Athens, or even in Elizabethan London; he would gladly have bartered the values of the Victorian age for those of periods so animated in spiritual and social life. It was not so with the eighteenth century: that century held his respect but it had no power over his imagination, it gave no quickening lift to the life of the spirit as he understood that life. The poetry of the period interested him, but it was not at all the kind of poetry he would have cared to write; the typical great men of the period interested him, but he would not have cared to be a great man on their pattern; the men of the period who had some appeal to his imagination, some power over his spirit, were, he was sure, the weaker and dryer for having lived when and where they did; and he was not one to agree that the privilege of expressing oneself in an adequate prose idiom could compensate for injury to the imagination and the spirit. He spoke of the eighteenth century from the outside, with no faculty for identifying himself with its modes of thinking, feeling, living. In his warmer moments he could speak of it as an "indispensable" age, "our indispensable age of prose and reason"—chilly praise! at other times, more sharply, he spoke of it as "provincial and second-rate."

One further conclusion imposes itself. However he might attack Romanticism and the Romantic age, he was himself a Romantic. Wordsworth meant incomparably more to him than Gray; Goethe incomparably more than Butler; Newman and Emerson incomparably more than Johnson and Wilson. His quarrels with the Romantics were family quarrels; if their manners and morals irritated and offended him ("What a set! what a world!") he never lost his sense of intimacy with them, or his power of saying about them what was profound, and, if incomplete, essential.

MAURICE BLONDEL'S "ACTION" AGAINST THE TOTALITARIANS

R. Jaques

THE great democracies are confronted today with the problem of action in a radically urgent setting; their very existence depends upon an estimate of the *élan vital* of the totalitarian powers. Nowhere is this clash of forces felt more intensely than in France where Action has come to have a glorious or a sinister meaning varying with the political party using the term. Even the Church is rent by the intensity of the political struggle: Catholics are members of the Action Française and support the Comte de Paris, or they declare their allegiance to Blum, Jouhaux, and the Socialists. This rivalry is so strong that Catholic writers of the Left have been socially boycotted by church officials adhering to the Fascists. An outstanding Socialist writer in Fascist Provence must display considerable courage.

In this contentious atmosphere a Catholic philosopher who attempts an analysis of action has no lack of opportunity for creating misunderstanding among friends and foes alike. And such misunderstandings have pursued Maurice Blondel, the philosopher of Aix-en-Provence, ever since his early attempts to present a thesis upon the subject of action. *L'Action*, presented at the Sorbonne in 1893, was an unusual thesis whose ideas have caused its author to be condemned at various times by rational idealists, Bergsonians and neo-Thomists, and at the outset of his career prevented him from teaching in the national university system.

Maurice Blondel was born in 1861 at Dijon and attended the Lycée there. His teacher Alexis Bertrand aroused his interest in Maine de Biran, the well-known French psychologist of the early nineteenth century who has been called the French Fichte. More important for his later philosophical development were the influences of Léon Ollé-Laprune and Emile Boutroux, who acted as his mentors at the famous Ecole Normale, Paris, that curious semi-monastic building in the rue d'Ulm where the flower of young French students pursues studies for advanced university degrees. Through the influence of Raymond Poincaré, Blondel was enabled to overcome the hostility of the rationalists in the Sorbonne and was ap-

pointed in 1895 to the University of Aix-Marseille, where he has served as professor for over forty years.

Ollé-Laprune had studied closely Newman's *Grammar of Assent* and had adopted the latter's distinction between real certitude and abstract certitude. His pupil, Blondel, who dedicated his thesis of 1893 to Ollé-Laprune, makes much of the distinction of real and notional knowledge: only through action is real knowledge attained. In order to attain truth in the concrete, abstract logic must be supplemented by action.

Boutroux moulded Blondel's view of the nature of science, and as a necessary corollary, of the relation of science to religion: there is no perfect fusion of mathematics and concrete science, and hence science at any given time depends upon an irrational factor as well as a rational one. In the actually existing phenomena, that is, there is more than is shown in the analysis of ideas. This seemingly irrational factor, which is designated "action," forms the subject of a series of Blondel's recently published works: *La Pensée* (two volumes), *L'Etre et les êtres*, and *L'Action* (two volumes).

What significance have these works for political philosophy and social movements in France today? Perhaps some idea of their importance is glimpsed through stating that Bergson and Proust were fascinated by the phenomenon of change in consciousness; Blondel and many other contemporary writers, such as François Mauriac, Georges Bernanos, Louis Lavelle, Gabriel Marcel, and Jacques Chevalier, are impressed with the need of the supernatural in consciousness. Blondel, unlike Bergson, is not prepared to confine his philosophy to the immanent order; an account of action must include human, animal, and divine action.

What is the relation of the term action to instinctive behaviour? This is surely a question of high import for politics. For many people action now denotes a party slogan for instinctive behaviour of the masses—Action Française, Action Liberale Nationale, Action Catholique, etc. The traditional meaning of the term, however,—a legacy from Aristotle—designates the fulfilment of a virtuality or a possibility which ends in a state of relative perfection, e.g. the idea of walking becomes the act of walking, the acorn becomes the oak. The term thus denotes actuality rather than activation.

It is surprising, indeed, that another conception of action has gained such currency in recent years, the conception of action as brute force, that it has even been used, according to Blondel, by the partisans of the traditional Thomistic philosophy. This con-

ception regards thought as the very negation of action, activity as radically different from the idea. Formerly action was the means of making ideas clear, distinct, and verifiable; its function now is to abolish all ideas.

Apart from the influence of Fascism, there is a philosophical reason for the violence with which such an opposition has been sustained of recent years: the exaltation of a mystical type of action is caused in part by the excessive aridness of the concept of intelligence which a previous generation of philosophers possessed. At the end of the nineteenth century the rationalism, determinism, and self-sufficiency of science was still widely maintained; the bankruptcy of science in its business of explaining the universe was not yet evident. Boutroux and Blondel were among those who indicated the coming change of the current, and Blondel, indeed, has now advanced so far that he does not hesitate to proclaim that there are various keys to reality—art, positive science, poetry, metaphysics, asceticism, and even mysticism. Music does not appear explicitly in this list but it may be assumed that he would agree with Marcel Proust that it is pre-eminently suitable for eliciting the truth about certain psychological experiences.

All these keys must be used judiciously; the period of watertight compartments for science, art, and religion is past and gone. Blondel is opposed to the Thomist hierarchy in which reason assumes the throne; the artificial deification of one human faculty in isolation from the others is decried by him. From this point of view, too, Blondel is able to point out the defects of the children of the rebellion, those writers who have depreciated intelligence to such an extent as to have confided their hopes entirely to obscure impulses. Such a writer as Georges Sorel, the arch inspirer of Mussolini, who conceives intelligence as merely superficial in this work-a-day world, is as far from realizing the significance of action as those French neo-Thomists who in effect substitute theory for practice, the metaphysics of Aristotle for salvation. While safeguarding the traditional meaning of action, therefore, Blondel intends to comment upon both abusive tendencies so as to revivify the dynamism of intellectuals like the neo-Thomists and diminish the effervescence of the extreme irrationalists. Well may he compare his task to the difficult one undertaken by the tight-rope walker who endeavours to balance himself by means of a long bamboo pole, and who thus tries to avoid coming to grief either on the left or on the right.

It will be readily understood that this independent attitude is

apparent, too, in his references to social and political questions. The excesses of Fascism are decried as clearly in his writing as they are in Georges Bernanos; yet that does not prevent him from pointing out defects in the organization of democratic society, such as the failure to solve the problem of distribution of goods, nor imply his complete allegiance to one of the Socialist parties. While most of Blondel's articles are to be found in the technical journals of philosophy, he has collaborated in the *Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée*, a series of monographs devoted to contemporary social, literary, and philosophical questions, and is recognized as one of the leading minds by the young group of Catholic writers associated with that series. Some measure of the very considerable influence that his doctrine exerts upon the young French mind may be indicated by the fact that at the International Congress of Philosophy, held in Paris in 1937, Blondel addressed an overflow audience which was largely composed of young people; indeed, the enthusiasm aroused by this frail, practically blind, professor of philosophy may be compared with that aroused by Bergson in a similar group of students in the period immediately preceding the Great War: the spiritualizing and dynamic force of "action" is not inferior to the force of the *élan vital*.

The essential purpose of Blondel is philosophical, and, as expressed at the International Congress in Paris, it is to restore the concept of transcendence to philosophy. It is this very concept that disappears in the Fascist state because there is no value or purpose apart from the ends, frequently arbitrary and immediate, of the state. In cruder language, the Fascist state may be said to abolish God since it has no employment for a personality transcending and existing independently of its requirements.

The very object of Blondel's study, then, is to effect a *rapprochement* between philosophy and life, and between our thinking and acting. The modern tends to avoid asking the metaphysical questions, what is pure action, and what are the conditions of human action dependent upon it? Yet man acts as if he were really possessed of a self independently of a transcendent regulating force. A rigid separation and exclusion of the metaphysical and religious problem from the problems of society is bound to have serious consequences. As Henri Poincaré has said so forcibly, "there can be no scientific morals, neither can there be any immoral science."

In similar fashion Blondel goes on to maintain that the moral and religious problem is not in the last analysis separable from the

metaphysical; the problem of conduct and belief involves a scrutiny of the means which man possesses of getting into touch with reality. What is the metaphysical basis upon which persons have the privilege of choice thrust upon them? "Pour agir, il faut participer à une puissance infinie: pour avoir conscience d'agir, il faut qu'on ait l'idée de cet infini pouvoir. Or, c'est dans l'acte raisonnable qu'il y a synthèse de la puissance et de l'idée d'infini; et cette synthèse, c'est ce qu'on nomme la liberté."

Blondel's originality will be discovered in the profound depths that he explores in order to answer seemingly simple questions; his integral method does not permit the solution of any one question to the exclusion of the others. Thus his study of action examines just that feature which philosophers in general, and idealists in particular, had assumed as self-evident, namely, the activity of the mind in attaining knowledge.

To understand Blondel it is necessary to remember that he considers action as something interior rather than exterior, not a fixed residue but an infinite striving; action is transitive to such a small degree that where there is merely movement there is no action.

Now if the process of obtaining knowledge is carefully considered, it will be obvious that man does not grasp knowledge in the first instance as he would a physical object. It is truer to say that knowledge takes hold of him. On the other hand, man never enjoys pure inertia in knowing; to receive knowledge is an act. The first act, therefore, is produced by a factor independent of man; the second act proceeds from the *foyer* of the human mind.

What dire results the overlooking of this fact has produced in European thinking! How curious that since the time of Kant, his followers, the various brands of idealists, once they have convinced themselves that they are the only artisans of truth, cease to believe in truth; all science becomes human appearance. From Kant, Hegel, Vaihinger, the step to the pragmatist position, that truth is what we find to be emotionally satisfying, is but a short one. If, however, the latest developments of science have taught us to be cautious in accepting partial views and rejecting complete explanations, does that mean that truth designates only a hollow idol with feet of clay? If it does, thinking is fast heading for suicide because it is the aspiration after complete reality that drives mankind on to fresh conquests in science.

The development of knowledge is sustained by intellectual action which contains an intention surpassing all visible and transitory realizations. Every intellectual initiative encloses a principle of movement or dynamism which cannot be fully exhausted in ideas. It is now apparent why the intellectual action is so important: while never the same for two seconds, it is eternally the same; it has a continual power of surpassing itself. At each instant it darts out from a shadow, and at each instant it drags a shadow along with it.

The act of accepting truth equals the permanent avowal, that we are ourselves only in so far as we recognize the *other* as other. The spontaneous movement of the mind is to believe in what it conceives and to postulate implicitly a reality that is at least possible or virtual. This realist appetite of thinking cannot be satisfied by idealism and the other forms of relativism or humanism. The light which lighteneth every man coming into the world is found to be of non-human origin.

The philosophies of the German idealists and of pragmatists like Dewey have failed to recognize the necessary realist appetite which is contained in the mind's action. As a result, it is not surprising that certain political dictators have made their own self-sufficiency a divine tenet, and that truth for Germans is now identified with the will of Herr Hitler.

The defects of the society divorced from God become more apparent with the development of the mystic cult of blood and race: the control of all modes of thinking, the abolition of liberty, the direct and immediate claim to fix eternal value in a terrestrial state of affairs, these are merely the prelude to the disintegration and impoverishment of mental and spiritual life.

There is a close correlation between the thinkers who affirm the existence of God and those who affirm human liberty, as between those who deny the existence of God and those who deny human liberty. The reason is that by separating ourselves from God, the only being who merits absolutely the title Being, we become the slaves of the materialistic physical world. Conversely, the consciousness of the interval that separates willing from what we have been able to will incites the idea of liberty and a continual effort to surpass ourselves in order to remain fully human. It is this consciousness that allows us to regain the principle of our being and attach ourselves to it; it is by this means that we are able to attach ourselves to the Divine without ceasing to be ourselves, and without Being's ceasing to be itself.

This relation may be made clearer by one of Blondel's experiences in the Alps. He had attained the summit of 3,200 metres, and, accompanied by his guide, began the descent from this great height. Some time later they found they were on the wrong course—the green fields appeared far below, but they remained cut off by sheer cliffs and avalanches. The only thing to do was to retrace their steps towards the summit, where alone safety was to be found, and then resume the right route. In the same way that the peaks of the mountains prove so important for the traveller, so does the maintenance of a Divine, essentially inaccessible to our thought and action, yet alone capable of guaranteeing the development of human action, the basis of our civilization and of its progress, the fundamental reason for an ascension to the state of society where goods are multiplied by being shared.

The insufficiency of our existence, the relation of our being to Being, the poverty which constitutes our greatness (as Pascal has so vividly described it), this is what is so singularly lacking in the thinking and deeds of recent years. The revival of this truly catholic way of thinking should do much to abate the arrogance of Fascism.

Philosophy in the eyes of Maurice Blondel is not a one-way street; the contributions of living to thinking are as important as those of thinking to living. The problem of conduct, whether in the social group, the national life, or the international scene, cannot be studied merely from the exterior ideational aspect. Many ethical doctrines in the democratic state have missed the essential point by laying down precepts intellectually and ignoring the problem of how the will is going to carry them out. Descartes is responsible for the chimera which suggests that science controls action as the flip of a finger controls a machine. In reality, *homo quantum concupiscit et potest, tantum scit;* desire and action underlie and lead to knowledge. And since science is only an offspring of desire, it becomes more and more important for man to have a just realization of the divine factor in him and beyond him.

Totalitarianism presupposes that the human agent is a machine associated with other machines and driven by a chief mechanic. The first feelings of liberty and duty, however, as Blondel has pointed out, negate this attempt to dehumanize entire nations; for they imply an end transcendent to all the conscious and unconscious elements of action. Because humanity has a metaphysical unity and destiny, the superiority of a race does not justify the extermination or enslavement of a race not so well endowed.

While philosophy by itself cannot indicate the positive content of the Divine Mind, yet by analysing the concept of transcendence it can underline the abuses which have arisen through its neglect, and its practical importance for the organization of society and the peace of the world. It may point out ceaselessly the abuses of tyranny and anarchy which result from the arrogance of mere human self-sufficiency. By furnishing a clearer conception of action, by demonstrating the incompatibility of Pure Action with the totalitarian state, by pointing out that man's realizations always contain more than his intentions, Blondel shows the concrete place that man's attunement to transcendence exercises in promoting the peace and progress of humanity.

THE SIEUR DE MONTAIGNE AND CICERO

WILLIAM HARDY ALEXANDER

THE classical renaissance, in so far as any movement can ever be fairly identified with a single person, began with Petrarch, and it was Petrarch's choices in Latin literature that proved most influential, not only in his native country which never departed from them, but in all Western Europe as well for a very considerable time. In prose—and it is only that which presently concerns us—his choice was Cicero. "Cicero's influence on Petrarch was not only the influence of a stylist; it was also a personal influence."[1] How personal we may judge from his letter written to Cicero as to an intimate friend and absolute contemporary;[2] it was penned in the passion of that high moment when he discovered the Verona manuscript of the Letters of Cicero to Atticus and to Quintus. Though Petrarch was, as subsequent critics like Erasmus demonstrated,[3] an imperfect writer of Latin prose himself, the point here is that he gave the initial impulse to Ciceronianism, that extraordinary cult of the style and vocabulary of Cicero which made him to a greater or less degree, varying with the country, the sacred canon of modern writing in classical Latin prose. The sacredness of the canon varied somewhat, as we have said, with the country; in Italy it became more than a canon, in fact a kind of literary fetish, as in the case of that strict Ciceronian Cardinal Bembo who "would not speak Latin with any casual scholar, lest by so doing he should mar the perfection of his own Latinity."[4] The self-conscious rigidity of Italian Ciceronianism which proved a dominant factor in rendering Italian scholarship sterile, was considerably modified beyond the Alps in countries where a new national spirit was arising to challenge Italian supremacy in more ways than one, but even so, Ciceronianism, the definite cultivation of Cicero as the one and only standard of Latin expression, flourished there too with very little question until the appearance of Erasmus's polemical *Ciceronianus* in 1528, of which Henry Osborn Taylor remarks that "Cicero never received a more elaborate drubbing

[1] J. E. Sandys, *Harvard Lectures on the Revival of Learning*, Cambridge, 1905, p. 149.

[2] *Epistolae de Rebus Familiaribus*, xxiv. [3] *Ciceronianus*, 1528.

[4] H. T. Peck, *History of Classical Scholarship*, New York, 1911, p. 303.

than from this dialogue."[5] The "apes of Cicero" far and near were infuriated; in France, for example, Julius Caesar Scaliger denounced Erasmus as a "parricide, parasite, and a corrector of printer's proofs," an interesting array of hardened criminals among whom to include a classical scholar!

Into that France, represented on its worse side in scholarship by the blustering Scaliger *père* and on its better side by Budé, probably the greatest Hellenist of his time, who also was grievously offended by Erasmus's *Ciceronianus*, was born just two years before the appearance of that powerful and in many ways determinative tractate, Marc-Antoine Muret, better known to many of us by the Latinized form of his surname, Muretus. Rhetoric and philosophy he studied, so he tells us himself, *ab ipso aetatis principio*, and his swift development in these subjects was phenomenal even in an age signalized by many examples of early erudition. He was largely self-taught, as eminent scholars not infrequently have been; he could not tolerate any professor at Poitiers, for example, where his parents had sent him to college, more than a couple of days.[6] He lays it to a species of invincible perversity and obstinacy of temperament, but perhaps in scholarship it cost him nothing, though in academic advancement, it ultimately signified much. He became professor in the Collège de Guyenne at Bordeaux at the age of twenty-one, and drew auditors for his lectures from as far away as Paris.[7] During his stay of four years in that region he was one of the *précepteurs domestiques* of none other than Michel, Sieur de Montaigne to be, who mentions him specifically in the twenty-fifth Essay, the famous discourse on education addressed to Diane de Foix, Countess of Gurson.

Passing from Bordeaux to Paris he there scored a *succès fou*. His Italian biographer Benci speaks of the sheer physical difficulty he had in reaching his chair in the lecture-hall: *per humeros quasi per undas gradiebatur ad suggestum*.[8] A new Demosthenes had arisen in a Christian Athens, it was said, and it is an historic fact, of some interest in the domain of education in general and of classical humanism in particular, that his orations of this period were subsequently read and commented on in French schools side

[5] *Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century*, New York, 1911, p. 164.

[6] Preface to his *Sententiae Graecae*. *Eveniebat id mihi . . . ut nullum doctorem triduum ferre possem.*

[7] Chas. de Job, *Marc-Antoine Muret*, Paris, 1881, p. 14. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

by side with those of Cicero down to the end of the eighteenth century.[9] But of the springs of action back of his fluent Ciceronianism and of his real dislike of rhetoric we are informingly advised by himself in a passage where he is referring to the use of commonplaces in professorial inaugural lectures: "I hardly brought myself to do these things in my early youth when I was canvassing every way of arriving at some reputation for eloquence and was exercising myself in those arts in the professors of which such things are not simply tolerated but actually demanded."[10] Apparently even in young manhood Muretus saw clearly that much of the vaunted Ciceronianism of his time was rhetoric pure and simple, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," the peculiar field of effort, as Montaigne says in the twenty-fifth Essay, of "the college Latinists, who after fifteen or sixteen years' study, have thrown away so much time in nothing but learning to speak." From a youthful scepticism like this which enabled Muretus to see clear through that part of Ciceronianism which was sheer pretence, there developed in him in later years that finely balanced judgment on the whole subject, emanating from one of whom it can be so truly said that "autant qu'un homme d'esprit peut ressembler à un grand homme, un causeur disert à un orateur, Muret ressemble à Cicéro."[11] The conclusion of Muretus, reached in the maturity of his powers, was undoubtedly unfavourable to the further cultivation of Ciceronianism, that is, the writing of modern classical Latin as an end in itself;[12] its value really lay, as he saw, in its affording a common scientific language for Europe in which the ancient literatures and civilizations could be discussed, as well as the beginnings of the new sciences, effectively and intelligibly. "In the judgment of so competent a scholar as Muretus . . . the reign of form had already ended and that of criticism had begun."[13] Indeed he had commenced to appreciate that fact as early as his thirtieth year. None the less we have the ironical situation that his own early orations in the Ciceronian manner continued to be inflicted on French school-children for two and a half centuries. It is, first and last, a solemn warning; the evil that men do lives after them.

We have seen already that Michel, future Sieur de Montaigne, had enjoyed the very great privilege of having Muretus for a

[9]H. T. Peck, *op. cit.*, p. 308. [10]de Job, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
[11]*Ibid.*, p. 397. [12]*Ibid.*, p. 247. [13]J. E. Sandys, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

précepteur domestique. The teacher (such a precocious teacher, lecturing in the Collège de France at twenty-one), and the pupil (such a precocious pupil, who had learned to speak Latin at the age of six years "without art, book, grammar, or precept, whipping, or the expence of a tear"),[14]—what was the influence of the former on the latter, one wonders? It would be tempting to ascribe to words then dropped by Muretus the attitude towards Cicero and Ciceronianism revealed by Montaigne in his twenty-fifth and sixty-seventh Essays, but we must recall that Muretus was then on his own admission making his way in the world by rhetoric, even if with some inner compunctions, and it is unlikely that he either found the occasion or cherished the desire to sow seeds of doubt in the boy's mind about that to which ninety-nine out of every hundred academicians were then solemnly devoting themselves. We must be satisfied to remark that both at full mental development came to very similar conclusions, though Muretus as a professor directed his shrewd criticism mostly against Ciceronianism, and Montaigne as a man of the world not only against Ciceronianism but against Cicero himself, at least in some aspects.

It is hardly possible for us in our time when the flaming words *quousque tandem, Catilina, abutere patientia nostra?* no longer awake a responsive echo in the breasts of the great majority of those who profess and call themselves educated, to conceive how sacred the very personality of Cicero seemed to men of the sixteenth century. Erasmus, who died protesting on his death-bed that he had never loved Cicero more than then, was talking not of Cicero's rhetoric but of Cicero the man, and Erasmus's criticism of Ciceronianism was itself viewed in most quarters as an attack in very bad taste upon the personal friend of all scholars, despite the fact that it was clearly directed against the exclusive domination of Cicero's style over men's methods of expression. A generation of reflection on Erasmus's *Ciceronianus* had undoubtedly altered public opinion somewhat, but it was still a bold thing for the Sieur de Montaigne to write, approximately about 1570, as follows: "As for Cicero, I am of the common opinion that (learning excepted) he had no great natural parts."[15] I cannot persuade myself that Montaigne had any justification, apart from a profound conviction

[14]Essay xxv. The translations given in the text of this paper are all taken from the quaint rendering of the *Essais* into English by Thomas Cotton, which is at the same time, I have satisfied myself, pretty sound. [15]Essay lxvii.

of the worth of his own judgment and of the conversation of his own particular cronies with himself, for using the words "of the common opinion"; for the purposes of this paper the point is that it was Montaigne's opinion. He continues: "He was a good citizen, of an affable nature, as all fat, heavy men, such as he was, usually are; but given to ease, and had a mighty share of vanity and ambition." Montaigne must have been reading some of Cicero's Letters dealing with his attempts to extort a Roman triumph out of his mountain-skirmish with the Pindenessitae, or his annoyance at Cato Uticensis for being willing to go as far as a vote of thanks but stopping quite definitely short of a triumph. Montaigne, of course, read the *Epistolae ad Atticum* with an aim far other than that of perfecting himself in the most finished epistolary Latin; he read these Epistles as we should read them today, to know the times and to know the man. "I delight," he says, "in reading his Epistles ad Atticum; notably because they contain a great deal of history and the affairs of his time; but much more because I therein discover much of his private humour; for I have a singular curiosity . . . to pry into the souls and the natural and true judgments of the authors with whom I converse." I trust that the very great modernity of this point of view in a sixteenth-century man as regards both a practically apotheosized figure and what was almost universally conceded to be not autobiography but a divine text-book for the complete letter-writer, is appreciated. In its way it marks the turn of the age just as much as Muretus's famous admission in Part II of his *Variae Lectiones* that he had ceased to regard the writers of the Ciceronian age as alone worthy of imitation.[16]

I pass now to consider Montaigne's attitude towards Cicero's words and works, and the words may not be overlooked, inasmuch as Ciceronianism, after every defence has been made for it, was always apt to be, and often was, simply a matter of words. Montaigne, as we have already seen, went so far as to find delight in the Epistles, especially those addressed to Atticus; the works that he found most useful for his design were those that treated of philosophy, but useful though they were, that is, as to matter, they bored him because of their manner of expression.

> But boldly to confess the truth, his way of writing, and that of all other long-winded authors, appears to me very tedious; for his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and etymologies take up the greatest part of the work: whatever there is of life

[16] J. E. Sandys, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

and marrow, is smothered and lost in the preparation. When I have spent an hour in reading him (which is a great deal for me) and recollect what I have thence extracted of juice and substance: for the most part I find nothing but wind; for he is not yet come to the arguments that serve to his purpose, and the reasons that should properly help to loose the knot I would untie. For me, who only desire to become more wise, not more learned or eloquent, these logical or Aristotelian dispositions of parts are of no use.[17]

The words "who only desire to become wise" set over against "more learned and eloquent" seem in themselves to be the proper criticism of an age gone mad over form, and in judging this and similar passages let us always remember that we are dealing with a man to whom the Latin text was in itself not the slightest trouble, who read his Latin at about the same stride as his French. The boredom did not therefore arise out of difficulty with the language in which Cicero's thoughts were expressed. Even so it was to the *matter* of the classical writers that Muretus had to call back the common sense of man from following after nonsense. "Who ever asked his pupil," cries Montaigne, seething with indignation against the unconscionable educational routines of the age, "what he thought of grammar and rhetorick, or of such and such a sentence of Cicero? Our masters dart and stick them full-feathered in our memories and there establish them like oracles, of which the very letters and syllables are of the substance of the thing."[18] I have myself a very great respect for Cicero's *De Officiis* which, for all that it is in the main a translation, has incorporated in itself so much that is Roman that I do not know where in the original language to turn for a completer view of the Roman character for better and for worse, but I admit readily that Montaigne has made the fair and the appropriate and the immensely modern criticism on this philosophical work of Cicero's and others like it; Cicero is the type of baseball pitcher or cricket bowler who has an excessive wind-up relative to the power of the ball he delivers. So at least it appears to us, but Cicero may have definitely adopted that superabundant or profuse style after careful reflection on the relative potentialities of the Latin and the Greek. Such at all events is the guess of Sir J. E. Sandys: "it is clear," he says, "that his natural and instinctive knowledge of the inherent limitations of the Latin language must have led him to feel that a certain amplitude of style was necessary to win the ear of a Roman audience."[19] Or perhaps one might say that with a people priding

[17]Essay lxvii. [18]Essay xxv.
[19]J. E. Sandys, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

itself on its practical outlook (*prudentia*) an easy amplitude of rhetoric tends always to replace the painful processes of thought.

It seems strange that the men of the Renaissance were able to overlook or ignore the fact that the Ciceronian eloquence had been severely censured by capable minds in antiquity; the truth is, as already noted, that Italian sentiment ran away with judgment in the beginning, and that it was not till later that the cooler sanity of northern scholars like Erasmus began to count. The Atticists of Cicero's own day against whom the *Orator ad M. Brutum* is directed, found Cicero inflated and bombastic; these are charges which, repeated in the third quarter of the next century, make the conservative Quintilian almost injudiciously indignant. Yet the *Dialogus de Oratoribus* of Tacitus, contemporary with Quintilian's high professorial distinctions, rather suggests that admiration for the great republican orator had dropped away heavily by then; there is in that tractate a world of keen criticism directed against weak joints in the Ciceronian armour, especially in regard to those orations of his middle years which Ciceronians usually regard as the most admirable. "Slow in acceleration," says Aper,[20] "tedious in getting his facts stated, leisurely in his digressions, he requires time to get roused and seldom develops any warmth; very few of his sentences are concluded neatly or with what I may call a flash of genius." And then the final barb: "He offers nothing you could quote, nothing to take home with you."

Montaigne in his sixty-seventh Essay, after remarking, as already noticed, that Cicero, "learning excepted, had no great natural parts," bows in all appearance a few lines later to the general opinion of his times when he says: "For what concerns his eloquence that is totally out of comparison, and I believe it will never be equalled." But he was well aware of the difference in opinion in antiquity, especially as revealed in the *Dialogus*, from which he quotes the view of Brutus that Cicero's eloquence was *fractam et elumbem*,[21] "feeble and suffering from a disease of the hip-joint," and as for himself, despite the conventional praise just recorded, he adds: "For my part, I better approve of a shorter stile, and that comes more roundly off." Or, as he puts it a little earlier in this same Essay, which constantly returns to the subject of Cicero: "I am for discourses that give the first charge into the heart of the doubt; his languish about his subjects and delay our expectation. Those are proper for the schools, the bar, and for

[20] *Dialogus*, chap. XXII, med. [21] *Ibid.*, chap XVIII, fin.

the pulpit, where we have leisure to nod, and may awake a quarter of an hour after, time enough to find again the thread of the discourse." It may be of interest to those who have never had their attention directed to it to know that presently Montaigne raises doubts about Plato too: "Will the license of the time excuse the sacrilegious boldness to censure the dialogisms of Plato himself, for as dull and heavy as the other before named, whilst he too much stifles his matter?" The Platonist will say: This is a hard saying; who can hear it?

When Montaigne speaks of the schools above, he has in mind, of course, the discourses of the professors which tended always in those days to be displays of rhetoric assumed to be Ciceronian; they can thus be described in parallel with the sermons of the pulpit and the orations of the bar, and Montaigne seems to have regarded them all alike as burdens which the conventions of civilized society compel us patiently to bear. But of the results of Ciceronianism in the French education of his time Montaigne can hardly bring himself to speak otherwise than with passionate detestation. After quoting with evident approval a certain Spartan, Zeuxidamus, who had explained to some interrogator in antiquity that the Spartans did not commit their institutions to writing for the perusal of their youth "because they would inure them to action, and not amuse them with words," he bursts out: "With such a one, after fifteen or sixteen years' study, compare one of our college Latinists, who has thrown away so much time in nothing but learning to speak. . . . We are kept four or five years to learn words only, and to tack them together into clauses; as many more to make exercises, and to divide a continued discourse into so many parts; and other five years at least to learn succinctly to mix and interweave them after a subtle and intricate manner. Let us leave it to the learned professors."[22] The divergence between students' needs and professors' fancies seems to be of long standing, and the end is not yet. I am sure that Muretus must have viewed with some dismay in later life the spectacle of his own orations in the Ciceronian manner being added to those of Cicero himself to make for French boys out of education a yet more grievous burden to be borne. He would undoubtedly have agreed with the exclamation of Montaigne in his *Consideration upon Cicero:*[23] "Away with that eloquence that so enchants us with its harmony that

[22]Essay xxv. [23]Essay xxxix.

we should more study it than things." One is reminded of those noble words near the end of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, where, after pointing out that style is not and never should be an end in itself, the unknown author adds: *Alia sunt meliora quae multo attentius petimus in vita*,[24] words that unfortunately the style-mad Ciceronians somehow overlooked. To the exclamation of Montaigne just quoted he goes on to add an ironical reservation which might have come from the pen of Muretus himself: "unless you will allow that of Cicero to be of so supream a perfection as to form a compleat body of itself." No, Muretus was not deceived despite his professional relationship with Latin teaching; "plus il avancera en âge, plus nous le verrons sceptique à l'endroit de la littérature latine moderne."[25] And what Latin scholar had a better right to say: *quasi nos hodie quid sit latine loqui sciamus!*[26]

The fact is that, as Muretus the professor had moved rapidly towards the modern view of scholarship, Montaigne constitutes a splendid example of the modern layman, possessed of a hundred interests besides that of style as an end in itself. The tempo of the world was accelerating, and Montaigne in his *Essais* reflects that acceleration. The panorama of human learning was already infinitely unfolding; no longer could men contemplate and practise style exclusively, and particularly a style of which accurate scholars were beginning to detect the fallacious artificiality. Montaigne turns to the classical writers for their content, not their form, and once one has done that, Ciceronianism for him drops into its proper and very limited place.

[24]IV, 56, 69 (There are other better objects in life, which we seek much more intently).

[25]de Job, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

[26]*Variae Lectiones*, xvii, 2 (as if we today had any idea what is Latin).

REVIEWS

THE PLAIN MAN AND THE WAR[1]

A. S. P. Woodhouse

I

There is a startling contrast between the simplicity and clarity of the immediate moral issues in the war and the jungle growth of confusing facts and ideas in which one finds oneself the moment the immediate issues are left behind. Through that jungle move strange lights, some of them kindled by false idealisms; and in its recesses are heard spirit voices, many of them due to the ventriloquism of Dr Goebbels (for German propaganda has not always been stupid and contemptible). The plain man badly needs a reliable guide.

Such a guide the Oxford University Press has sought to furnish in its *Pamphlets on World Affairs* (now twenty-two in number, and still in progress). With these in his hands, added to the British *Blue Book* and *White Papers* (made available to Canadians by the enterprise of the Musson Book Company, of Toronto), the plain man begins to see his way, to distinguish true lights from false, and to assess at their correct value the voices which alternately whine and threaten about the "Versailles Dictate," colonies, *Lebensraum*, and encirclement.

To objectify one's doubts and difficulties is not only to prepare for their solution; in itself it brings a measure of relief. Nothing in the *Oxford Pamphlets*, taken as a whole, is more admirable than

[1] *British War Blue Book* (Miscellaneous, no. 9); *British White Papers* (Germany, nos. 1 and 2), Toronto, Musson Book Co., 1939.

Why Britain Is at War, by Harold Nicolson, Cape, Penguin Books, 1939, 6*d*.

Poland, by W. J. Rose, Cape, Penguin Books, 1939, 6*d*.

Bohemia, by Franz von Lützow, with continuation by H. A. Piehler, Dent, Everyman's Library, 1939, 65c.

Canada, Europe and Hitler, by Watson Kirkconnell, Oxford University Press, 1939, $1.50.

Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, Oxford University Press, 1939, 10c. each. For individual titles see body of review.

their effort to state the case fairly and not to shirk the difficulties.[2] But it is upon these difficulties that enemy propaganda, secret and avowed, has thriven. So the publishers were wise to include a pamphlet, by E. H. Carr, on *Propaganda in International Politics* (no. 16), in which the demon is pretty successfully exorcised. Granted, he says in effect, that propaganda is omnipresent (and that we have no choice but to join in the game); still it labours under three inevitable limitations: it is not an independent weapon but one whose effectiveness rests in measure on its being coupled with the power, military, economic, or diplomatic, that wins victories; secondly, it is limited by the facts, which cannot in the long run be defied, and thirdly, by "the inherent strain of idealism in human nature," which cannot with impunity be outraged.

The Nazis' most persistent effort at propaganda outside the Reich has turned on the injustice of the Versailles Treaty and its supposed inconsistency with President Wilson's Fourteen Points. Accordingly, one of the most important pamphlets (no. 6) is G. M. Gathorne-Hardy's careful comparison of the two documents, which (without quite annihilating) gravely damages the German case. With even greater success J. L. Brierly is able to deal with a later bogey, the cry of *Encirclement* (no. 12). The policy of encirclement, he says, is very real; but it is an engine not of aggression but of defence, and of defence from an aggressive policy of encirclement, pursued by Germany on her own account against Czechoslovakia, with her axis-partner against France, and with her new ally against Poland. It is a pity that this able pamphlet cannot be read where alone the myth of Britain's aggressive designs against Germany is believed. Three other pamphlets would also do most good in that quarter, but are of value in clearing difficulties felt perhaps by ourselves and others. They are: Sir Arthur Salter's elaboration on Lord Halifax's phrase, *The Dual Policy* (no. 11); secondly, H. D. Henderson's *Colonies and Raw Materials* (no. 7), which decisively separates the two issues in a peaceful economy, and adds the irrefutable case against entrusting native populations to those who hold the Nazis' views on superior and inferior races and have their criminal record of exploitation and oppression; and, finally, R. R. Kuczynski's *"Living-space" and Population Problems* (no. 8), which

[2]In one instance at least, the reader should prepare himself for something of a shock: E. H. Hudson, in his *Turkey, Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean* (no. 9), is ruthless in showing the degree to which Britain was drawn into the game of power politics in that area.

demonstrates that Germany is not overpopulated in proportion to her area, and that her plea envisages both a redistribution of numbers as between industry and agriculture and a vast increase as a means of self-aggrandisement.

The British government, with overwhelming support from the facts, and with a sure tactical sense, has laid the responsibility for the war squarely on the shoulders of one man. And to that man R. C. K. Ensor has devoted two of the most illuminating and best-written pamphlets in the series—one on "*Mein Kampf*" (no. 3), and the other, *Who Hitler Is* (no. 20). These, with the *British White Paper* containing Sir Nevile Henderson's Report to Lord Halifax, give the plain man all he needs for gauging Hitler's strength and weakness, and the degree to which he is the prey of his own abnormal temper and of the system which it has prompted him to build. The time is ripe for a companion portrait of Stalin, and the material is, or will soon be, ready to hand. We hope that the Oxford editors will secure the services of Mr Ensor again.

A backward and a forward light is cast by popular works, in this and other series, on our less-known allies, Poland and Czechoslovakia, whose rights and aspirations must be understood if one is to think justly about the causes of the war and intelligently about the peace that must ensue. On *Czechoslovakia* R. Birley has an excellent Oxford Pamphlet (no. 15), whose information is conveniently supplemented by a standard history of *Bohemia*, brought up to date and reissued as a welcome addition to Everyman's Library. On Poland the *Oxford Pamphlets* have remained silent—perhaps because the subject impinged so closely on British-Russian relations and the *Pamphlets* could hardly escape being viewed as quasi-official publications; perhaps because it was not alone among our enemies that some distinction had to be drawn between peoples and their governments. Be this as it may, the lack was filled to admiration by W. J. Rose's *Poland* (Penguin Books), a study hastily prepared from abundant material, already under command, by a distinguished Canadian scholar. This generous six-penny volume gives us some 120 pages on the nation's checkered but vital past, and as much more on the Poland of our own day. In respect to France the publishers of the *Oxford Pamphlets* probably deem us sufficiently sympathetic and informed. But there are questions of our mutual interests in outlying regions, and the most effective means of co-operation in war and peace, on which further knowledge is desirable.

Sir John Hope Simpson's temperate and (if the truth must be told) rather dull pamphlet on *The Refugee Question* (no. 13) becomes more interesting when coupled with the brilliant essay (no. 5) where Julian Huxley explodes the racial theories on which Hitler's government proceeds, and with the *British White Paper* on the treatment of German nationals in Germany, a fearful indictment of Nazi methods, which is supplemented and confirmed by Mr Villard in a recent issue of the *Spectator* and by other neutral observers. The long persecution of the Churches is discussed (this time with a full view of the philosophic implications) in Principal Micklem's admirable pamphlet on *National Socialism and Christianity* (no. 18).

Many of the converging strands in these studies are no doubt caught up and woven together in a little book which will be available in Canada about the time that this review appears. It is *Why Britain Is at War* by Harold Nicolson (Penguin Books), whose importance (evident from English notices) accounts for its inclusion here, though one has not, of course, been able to see it. One may further recall Mr Nicolson's special knowledge of British foreign relations, his generous yet realistic liberalism, and the fact that he is among the most distinguished living writers of popular English prose.

A question of paramount importance remains. It is phrased in the title of L. P. Thompson's Oxford Pamphlet (no. 19): *Can Germany Stand the Strain?* The answer given is restricted to the economic front, and it is a cautious and reasoned negative, which (despite the somewhat different conditions today) is strongly confirmed by W. Arnold-Forster's history of *The Blockade, 1914-1919* (no. 17).

II

Of the *Oxford Pamphlets* bearing on Canada, the first, H. V. Hodson's *The British Empire* (no. 2), contains little that will be new to Canadians. The other two are in the special Canadian series. In *All Right, Mr Roosevelt* (no. C1) Stephen Leacock remains very much himself, affording a modicum of comic relief and of discursive wisdom—both in the semi-rural manner. The pamphlet to be effective only requires that one should imagine the President as occupying the other up-turned packing-box in the corner grocery. Personally, our vote would have gone for something more in the tone of *Lincoln Frees the Slaves*. Faultless in manner, but also

addressed rather to an American than a Canadian audience, is B. K. Sandwell's closely reasoned *Canada and United States Neutrality* (no. C2). Among the many good points that it makes is one about Canada's power to ensure that the North American point of view will always be represented in the counsels of the British Commonwealth.

But the chief contribution of Canada, so far, to the literature of the war is Watson Kirkconnell's *Canada, Europe and Hitler*, which in both utility and effectiveness ranks with the very best of the works under review, and which, unlike most of them, breaks new ground. The first half is devoted to the European scene, with chapters on the Nazi racial dogma, *Lebensraum*, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, which usefully supplement the works mentioned above, and with a full and illuminating introduction to the Ukrainian question (chap. VII), the outstanding example of legitimate and unsatisfied national aspiration in post-Versailles Europe. Only the cautious chapter on Russia (VIII) is already obsolete, and even there the author's salutary distrust of Stalin has saved him from false prophecy. The second half is devoted to the Canadian scene, and chiefly to the opinions and sympathies of the New Canadians in relation to their countries of origin and to the country of their adoption with its Imperial connections. The first part of the book is now recognized to have been not only highly useful in itself, but the essential background for the second part which dovetails with it quite beautifully (cf. especially the treatment of Ukrainian-Canadian opinion, pp. 137-52). Indeed no one can fail to admire the author's command of construction, as of the other parts of the technique of exposition. The device used for presenting the different shades of New Canadian opinion is to translate excerpts from the newspapers of the various groups. In many cases a pronounced change of tone is recorded when war is declared. This is research of permanent importance. It was rendered possible by Professor Kirkconnell's unique linguistic acquirements, and it is in some measure (we delight to hear) an outgrowth of his much-valued annual contribution to the QUARTERLY'S "Letters in Canada." The concluding chapter outlines a policy for the Dominion. Its advocacy of tolerance and generosity in our dealings with our minority groups is both right and prudent. Its advocacy of federalism as a panacea for Europe's ills, while in tune with much advanced thinking today, strikes us as altogether too utopian.

III

The rapid movement of events has already raised a crop of new issues demanding further *Oxford Pamphlets*. The plain man requires such information on Finland as is available on Czechoslovakia and Poland, and with this is bound up the whole question of Russia. For years Caliban in the Kremlin has been fooling the Western world to the top of its bent. Now we are told, what impartial observers must have guessed from the first, that negotiations broke down precisely because Stalin demanded to be allowed to pursue under the aegis of a Franco-British alliance his appointed career as gangster. The promised British publication of the documents in the case (which will no doubt be reissued here by Musson) will be followed, it is to be hoped, by the necessary Oxford pamphlets on the problems emerging in the wake of Russia's perfidy: the position of Scandinavia and of Turkey; the possibility of a drive towards India, and (as connected therewith) the internal state of that wayward and unhappy country. For it is too early yet to be reassured on the inefficiency of the Soviet war machine.

And there are other questions on which the plain man needs information and some guide to his thinking; three of which we will make bold to name.

The first we will call the Plot against the Possessors. Naturally, one cannot know in what degree the plot exists as a clearly formulated plan and compact; but that it exists in some degree leaps to the eye. It does not take a Hitler to see that the British and French colonial empires are the world's richest prize, or the additional fact that Britain polices not her own Empire alone but the whole colonial world. If her power were crippled the overseas possessions of every weaker state—the Dutch East Indies for example—would go the way of her colonies and some of her Dominions; or at least the American navy alone would stand between them and that fate.

The second question looks further ahead and is of a kind little essayed by the *Oxford Pamphlets* to date, save in Sir Alfred Zimmern's brilliant *Prospects of Civilization* (no. 1): the possible reorganization of Europe after the war—a subject on which some English thinking seems to be far outrunning that of France. It would be well to hear the case for federalism fully put. Mr Nicolson and the Master of Balliol, both of whom profess some belief in federalism, have recently uttered warnings, the one against political

day-dreaming, the other on the necessity of working towards the federal ideal very slowly and through existing (or through simple and easily improvised) machinery. Perhaps a sane pessimist would be content if from the struggle there emerged a restored League of Nations and a will to give collective security a chance. Nothing would contribute more to the spirit required for such a venture than the cultivation of genuine democracy at home.

That, then, is the third question: the perennial one of democracy. We often hear that the subject has been exhausted. We often observe that, when it is discussed, democracy is defined partially, or with reticences, or in merely negative terms. Some there are who would identify it with their own interests or ideals—with the continuance of capitalism unmodified or with the instant completion of the socialized state. And the sense of these divergent interpretations (even when no one of them is adopted) begets the reticences of which we complain, and which in turn drive the exponent of democracy back upon negative definition—democracy is the opposite of dictatorship. Indeed it is; but it is more than that, and merely thus to define it is to yield the initiative to the enemy. Perhaps the commonest and most dangerous error—for which there is some excuse in the history of democracy—is its confusion with individualism, so that incentives to disruption are over-emphasized, and incentives to cohesion (which are essential not to democracy only but to any form of society) are ignored. It would seem useful to revive the image—it was really never more than an image—of a social contract. A contract, as Burke pointed out when criticizing the Lockean form of the image, involves obligations as well as rights, the enjoyment of the rights being dependent on the loyal fulfilment of the obligations. To be a member of a democracy is virtually to assent to a social contract between all the members. And its central clause may be supposed to state that democracy means the execution of the will of the majority as that will is expressed from time to time freely and peacefully through parliamentary institutions. But the will of the majority is subject to change. Every individual in a democracy—thus we may imagine another clause to read—has the right to try and change the will of the majority *by persuasion*, and to that end must enjoy freedom of speech and of combination with other individuals. Those who would appeal to violence neither need nor could, on this theory, claim such right. Nor is the case altered in the least by the pretence of the violent (whether honest or dishonest)

to act in the best interests of the majority. "That's the question," said Cromwell, "what's for their good, not what pleases them." It has been the pretext of dictators in every age, and it is the antithesis of democracy, whose reliance must be on the possibility, through persuasion, of making the will of the majority and the good of the community coincide. Persuasion is not only democratic but social—it is an experience that fosters the spirit on which it relies; violence is the antithesis of both democracy and society. It seems possible that a nation whose citizens had really accepted the democratic principle at home might, as time went on, be willing to try its application in a wider community whose members were not persons but states.

ENGLISH HUMANISM*

W. G. Rice

Contemporary reviewers sometimes seem akin to the American lady who expressed to Matthew Arnold her satisfaction in the thought that excellence is common and abundant; and no doubt we need frequently to be reminded, with Arnoldian firmness, that excellence (as the Greek poet long ago observed) is a dweller among rocks hardly accessible, so that a man must almost wear his heart out before he can reach her. One can be sure, however, that Professor Bush (though he shows no signs of exhaustion) has reached the high places; and that accordingly *The Renaissance and English Humanism* is a distinguished addition to an excellent series. Its author is an admirable lecturer, able to contrive discourses that are at once orderly, perspicuous, lively, and full of ideas. As their background they have the reading and reflection of many studious years; but this learning is borne with a lightness which is in itself a graceful compliment to those who listened. And the prose is a delight. The pleasant gleams which shimmer across its surface never dazzle or bewilder the reader, who always knows which way the stream is flowing, and the nature of the terrain through which it passes. Nor does it forget its bright speed until it comes finally safe to sea.

**The Renaissance and English Humanism*, by Douglas Bush, The Alexander Lectures in English, 1939, The University of Toronto Press, $1.50.

The severe historian nowadays is usually preoccupied with the discovery of what is, or was; and no doubt his researches, leading as they do to the recognition and establishing of facts and causes, are often of extraordinary interest. It is refreshing, however, to find an historically minded critic who goes beyond what is and was to the elucidation of what is significant. Such a task Mr Bush has undertaken. From the confusions and complications of the very complex age which we call the Renaissance he has sought to separate out and to appraise a central tradition. Necessarily he begins with a review of theories concerning the essential nature of the period he is considering, exhibiting for brief inspection and criticism a dozen concepts which the last century has brought forth. He wisely makes no attempt, however, to weigh all the doctrines and explanations available to the modern scholar, refusing to become entangled in theories of theory, saying nothing about views that would make the Renaissance an incidental result of the commercial prosperity of the Italian trading cities or of the capitalist economy, leaving out of account such eccentricities as that of Neumann, and mentioning only in passing the difficulties which arise when attempts are made to work out simple relations between the Renaissance and the Reformation. He aims only at an analysis which will reveal, through an examination of principal factors, his main position. This is, first, that the Renaissance belongs with the Middle Ages instead of with the modern world; and secondly, that the binding connection comes through the persistence of a tradition of Christian humanism that gathered strength as Europe recovered from the disorder into which the barbarian invasions had thrown it, and endured until science and a naturalistic philosophy combined for their successful attack in the seventeenth century.

Mr Bush, belonging as he does to a school which values truth above novelty, would be the last to claim that these theses are strikingly new; but he manages to present them with much original forcefulness and skill. The authority of Burckhardt and Symonds is still strongly pervasive among scholars of the older generation, while Marx and Weber captivate the young; so that we certainly profit by being told plainly and wittily once more that the Mediaeval Man was not crushed by the weight of a Church that had been built to shelter him, or stifled by a fog of scholastic philosophy, and that the Man of the Renaissance was only occasionally, not typically, a neo-pagan rebel or a hypocritical capitalist. Empha-

sizing the unity, rather than the differences, in European culture, Mr Bush insists with persuasive cogency that the custodians of the great tradition shaped it, from the twelfth through the sixteenth century, according to a long-established pattern. The classics, with their emphasis upon morality and responsibility, had been accepted (if with reservations) by the Fathers; the greatest of the scholastics did not hesitate to ground themselves upon Aristotle; and the new impulse given by the revival of classical learning simply presented in another form the problem of bringing together Christian teachings and those of the philosophers, historians, and poets of Greece and Rome. "The Renaissance inherited the Christianized didactic tradition of the Middle Ages and gave it an added strength derived from fuller knowledge, admiration, and understanding of the ancients." This formulation makes possible the linking of John of Salisbury with Petrarch, whose humanism is unintelligible if it is divorced from his religious faith. Mr Bush is of the opinion that Petrarchan humanism was sharpened and concentrated by the necessity for opposing the sceptical rationalists and Averroists whose doctrines were weakening faith and turning men's minds in the direction of naturalism. His simplifications are rarely misleading, but in his enthusiasm, here and elsewhere shown, for Renaissance Platonism, he handles too unsympathetically the Aristotelians, whom he seems to associate always with a barren logic and a dissolvent philosophy. Degenerate Platonism, with its anti-rationalism and its confused mystical impulses, could probably be proved as dangerous to humanistic thinking and acting as Aristotelianism at its worst—so that, for instance, in the case of Spenser (whom Mr Bush scarcely mentions), it is finally the Aristotelian rather than the Platonic element that is respectable. But this is by the way.

It is an easy step from Petrarch to the Florentine Platonists, and another to Erasmus and the northern humanists. One of the bonds that unites many of these men is an admiration for Cicero; and Mr Bush brings in neatly a reminder as to the real character of Ciceronian imitation, which was certainly much more than a stylistic fad in the case of such a man as Erasmus. Scores of writers have presented the Dutch scholar as a noble example of Renaissance humanism; but no one has succeeded better in fixing his place, or in defining his essential character, than Mr Bush has done in the space of a few pages. By an easy transition the third lecture takes us to the consideration of sixteenth-century

England. Here Mr Bush finds not a new thing, but only what is to be expected in the projection of the line already clearly traced in Continental humanism—a tradition that emphasizes training in virtue and good letters and works for the production of the true wayfaring Christian, the public-spirited aristocrat, the Governor. Rightly rejecting the notion that Tudor humanism was checked and destroyed in the middle of the sixteenth century, Mr Bush points out that such a view can be held only by those who equate humanism with scholarly production, and shows that in fact not this, but discipline, the training up of men to the good life, was the principal aim. "From More to Milton the writings of English humanists are chiefly on public affairs, education, and religion." But before Milton the forces of disintegration were powerfully at work. Within the Church Protestantism, with its sectarian fanatics, its doctrine of predestination, and its antinomian mysticism, was inimical. Outside the Church sceptical and naturalistic philosophies worked to destroy the synthesis of a More or an Ascham, while the authority of the classics was undermined by the new science. And whatever the gain from the new thought, the loss was immense. Gone was the double vision of man's frailty and greatness; gone the view of the universe which makes it a battleground for the desperate unending struggle of evil with good. "It is the loss of that religious view of life which makes the modern literature of social forces and other merely mundane and human motives seem, in comparison, such a small pinched thing. No proletarian background, no dark inner world of the unconscious, can take the place of a stage which includes God and Satan, heaven and hell."

After this it is inevitable that Mr Bush should turn to Milton, who, more than any other English poet, expresses the humanist concept. Standing in a direct line with John of Salisbury, Milton towers above him and above all other English humanists in his ability to present the great problems dramatically in terms of the great tradition. If the unshakable virtue of the Lady in *Comus* and of Christ in *Paradise Regained* somewhat impairs the force of Milton's handling of the temptation theme, his success in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson* is striking. Here is the triumphant merging of Hebraism and Hellenism, of the obligation to obey God's law with the obligation to find and to follow the light of reason and to exercise self-control. Not through the reckless indulgence of a *libido sciendi*, not through an easy natural goodness, but by the humble unwearied effort to attain to that virtuous conduct possible

to man—a conduct that is more than three-fourths of life—will the Paradise within be achieved.

To Mr Bush this doctrine appears to have an enduring validity; and his power of convincing us of its present relevance, and of persuading us that it is still important, constitutes a principal merit of his book. It is, of course, possible to challenge him at a dozen points, to ask from him more evidence, sharper definitions. And he promises us, indeed, a fuller treatment, a larger demonstration which will go outside the limits here set for him. Within these limits, however, he has done excellently well; the main lines are drawn right; and it seems doubtful that in a more elaborate essay he will wish to change very much the pattern that he has here presented.

THE AMARNA AGE*

CYRUS H. GORDON

No group of ancient inscriptions is more important or interesting than the Amarna tablets. These documents are for the most part the diplomatic correspondence between Amenophis III and IV, on the one hand, and the rulers of Western Asia, on the other. They give us a remarkably vivid picture of the international situation around the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C. Babylonia was surviving by little more than sheer inertia under the decadent Cassite kings. North Mesopotamia was largely in Mitannian hands, but the Assyrians were also on the scene with a brilliant future before them. The Hittites were pushing southward from Asia Minor into North Syria. The marauding bands of Habiru (probably the Hebrews) were wresting town after town in Canaan (Syria-Palestine). These and other movements were changing the map of the civilized world while old empires tottered and new ones emerged from obscurity. The pharaohs were still treated with deference by the kings of Asia, but Egypt was resting on her laurels and losing her prestige along with her Canaanite provinces. Amenophis IV (Ikhnaton) was particularly negligent of his empire,

*_The Tell el-Amarna Tablets_, by Samuel A. B. Mercer [Professor of Semitic Languages and Egyptology, Trinity College, University of Toronto] (assisted by Frank Hudson Hallock), 2 vols., The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1939, $17.50.

engrossed as he was in a fanatical religious revolution. All this and more is reflected in the texts edited in transliteration and translation, with notes, indices, etc., by Professor Mercer.

The Amarna Age was one of internationalism. Nations from Mesopotamia to Egypt were in communication with one another by corresponding in the international diplomatic language, Babylonian. Thus, when a Canaanite prince, for example, exchanges letters with the pharaoh, neither Canaanite nor Egyptian is used, but Babylonian. True it is that the letters are usually couched in a barbaric Babylonian through which the linguist can detect the scribe's native tongue; but still it is an intelligible Babylonian, and a badly written international language is far better than none.

Nor is the Amarna Age known to us only from the Amarna letters. Aside from the records of Egypt, we now have, from about this period, a rich Canaanite literature from Ugarit, abundant Hittite documents, the archives of the Hurrians (Horites) in Nuzu, Hurrian texts from Boghazköy and Ugarit, Assyrian legal texts from Assur, etc. Although archaeological discovery has been filling some of the voids, parts of the second millennium B.C. are still almost blanks for the historian. However, the Amarna Age is one of the best documented periods in ancient oriental history.

It is partly because the Amarna Age is so well attested that it constitutes such a knotty problem for the scholar. Its records are written in Hittite, Hurrian, Ugaritic, and other recondite languages, in addition to the well-known Accadian and Egyptian. It becomes increasingly difficult for one man to control the sources of the Age as our material grows almost by leaps and bounds.

Even though much detailed work remains to be done, there has been a genuine need for a revised, up-to-date corpus of the Amarna texts to take the place of the still excellent, though now antiquated, edition that Knudtzon prepared before the Great War. The work is one that requires breadth of scholarship as well as painstaking linguistic technique. Very few scholars are equipped for such a Herculean task. Specialists would appreciate it if an Albright, a Friedrich or a Goetze would undertake it, or better yet a combination of top-ranking scholars, for no savant would be so untruthful or bold as to claim a mastery over all Amarna source-material. But the fact remains that none of these men has ventured the task. While the scholar at least had a nearly complete, though somewhat outmoded corpus, the general student could do nothing with the transliterated Babylonian and too little with the German translation

of Knudtzon. In Dr Mercer's work, the specialist now has a collection of all the published texts, while the less advanced student has for the first time a complete English translation. We are all grateful to the author for a useful work, and we extend to him our hearty congratulations.

It is to Dr Mercer's credit that he fully realizes and acknowledges the greatness of Knudtzon's edition, and scholars should be thankful that he keeps Knudtzon's numbering of the texts. Had Dr Mercer changed the numbering, there would have been no end of confusion in future literature. As it is, all scholars can advantageously refer to Dr Mercer's volumes, which also include the tablets published since Knudtzon's opus. I am personally sorry that my publication of the eight additional fragments, found during the 1933-4 campaign of the Egypt Exploration Society under the direction of Mr J. D. S. Pendlebury, has not appeared in time to be included in Dr Mercer's volumes. My manuscript has been ready for press for some time but the book of which it is to be a part (*City of Akhenaton* III) has been delayed and now that the war has thrown cultural activity out of gear (especially in the belligerent countries), it may be postponed for some time to come. Therefore, in the light of present events, it is well that Dr Mercer did not wait for my publication.

Since the Amarna tablets are so extensive (368 are in Dr Mercer's edition), it is only natural that I should differ with him on many linguistic, philological, archaeological, and historical points. However, I refrain from giving a tedious list of corrections and criticisms lest it obscure the more important fact that Dr Mercer has made these precious documents accessible to a wide reading public and perhaps has also established "a stepping stone to a future and better edition" as he modestly phrases it in the preface.

REASON AND REVELATION*

FRANK W. BEARE

The three lectures which are published in this little book offer a popularizing sketch of the manner in which the most notable thinkers of the Middle Ages handled the problem of the relation

**Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, by Etienne Gilson [Director of the Institute of Medieval Studies, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto], The Richards Lectures in the University of Virginia, Scribners, 1938, $1.50.

of reason and revelation. Professor Gilson treats first of the Augustinian tradition, for which he finds the keynote in the conviction that "the safest way to reach truth is not the one that starts from reason and then goes on from rational certitude to faith, but on the contrary, the way whose starting point is faith, and then goes on from Revelation to reason" (p. 17). The same principle is given succinctly in Anselm's famous phrase *Credo ut intelligam*. The word "safest," we may remark in passing, will hardly do; for St Augustine, and for his disciples, this is not the "safest" way, but the *only* way. The lecturer goes on to suggest that the successive exponents of this doctrine differ from one another mainly by reason of the different presuppositions concerning the proper use of the human reason which prevailed from one period to another. He attempts to illustrate the application of this thesis in respect of St Anselm, Roger Bacon, and Ramon Lull.

This first lecture is entitled "The Primacy of Faith." In the second lecture, to which he gives the title "The Primacy of Reason," M. Gilson introduces the exponents of the radically different tradition which stems from the Mohammedan philosophers Avicenna ..nd, more directly, Averroes, and which ultimately brings in the Aristotelian philosophy to challenge the dominant Platonism of the Christian West. He goes to some trouble to show how the earliest Latin thinkers who were under the influence of Averroes tried to get around the very great difficulties involved in the attempt to legitimize Aristotle in a sphere which had made Platonism an essential part of orthodoxy; they were obliged either to take their theology very lightly or to treat their philosophical conclusions as a form of interesting but useless intellectual exercise, which led inevitably to conclusions that had to be rejected because they were at variance with what were taken to be the data of revelation. M. Gilson is particularly interested in making the point that the roots of modern rationalism must be traced back to this period, and not merely to the experimental science of the sixteenth century.

In the last lecture of the series, M. Gilson devotes himself mainly to the effort of St Thomas Aquinas to effect "The Harmony of Reason and Revelation" by a rigid delimitation of the spheres of faith and knowledge. It is more than strange to find that the lecturer is able to bring us from the Averroists to St Thomas without so much as mentioning the name of Peter Abelard. Actually, it is hard to see how Thomism could have found any

acceptance in the Church of the thirteenth century had not the *Sic et non* demonstrated that there was room for argument about the very content of Revelation, and thus opened the way for a radically new doctrine of God, man, and the world. The lecture continues with a rapid survey of the revolt against the scholastic theology and philosophy, which gathers momentum from the fourteenth century onwards and culminates in Luther's absolute rejection of Aristotle and all his works; it concludes with a brief suggestion of the actuality of the ancient problem, with rather too great readiness to suppose that St Thomas can still tell us how it ought to be envisaged.

SIX ENGLISH POETS*

G. G. Sedgewick

The "points of central importance" in Professor Wilson Knight's new book are as follows: it shows, in six essays and an epilogue, how certain great artists in literature exhibit "the interplay of materialistic with innate, or spiritual, forces," the "opposition . . . of action and passivity, the vital and the rigid, time and eternity"; it argues that creative art on a high level "depends on the union, or the ever-present felt possibility of union, of two sets of positive forces . . . : (i) Christianity, and (ii) Eros"—a union of "the parental-filial and erotic impulses, of gentle love and sexual power." These "points" are not displayed in any organized and progressive discussion. The book's chief argument, says Mr Knight, lies in his "selection and analysis in juxtaposition" of six English writers: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Pope, and Byron. *The Burning Oracle*, it would seem, aims to pronounce judgment upon these great ones in terms of a holistic conception of literature.

All this is obviously a large order for a book of 290 pages, though Mr Knight could readily have filled it to the satisfaction of all customers. The holistic conception is not new, of course; but it still remains difficult and elusive, as the quasi-technical phrases I have quoted would suggest. I have not read *The Christian Renaissance* and, for anything I know, that book may expound Mr Knight's doctrine in full. But a reader of *The Burning Oracle*

**The Burning Oracle*, by G. Wilson Knight [Professor of English, Trinity College, University of Toronto], Oxford University Press, 1939.

will learn from it not much more about its own central thesis than he can pick up from the summary just given. That is a pity. Even one who is not endowed with "mystical sympathies" of Mr Knight's variety would be glad to know more about them; for they look noble, and they certainly kindle in the gifted critic a perfect holocaust of enthusiasm. It is indeed a pity to see what might have been a phoenix develop into one of Mrs Poyser's chickens.

I suppose it is old-fashioned pedantry to suggest that "importances" which are "central" to the structure of a book should be developed early and well, and not left to fragmentary statement in an epilogue. It would have been easy for Mr Knight to set forth his doctrine of the union of opposites in an introductory chapter. And no living man could expound that particular doctrine so well as he. Or he could have made his splendid essay on "The Shakespearian Integrity" the radiating centre of *The Burning Oracle*. One sentence from that essay reveals Mr Knight's power of imaginative definition when he really applies himself to it: "The Shakespearian poetry," he says, "grows from a certain wholeness responding directly to the wholeness of creation, with all opposing tendencies allowed to mature in fullest freedom under the final synthesis." That fine utterance could easily have been made to serve as text for a discourse as illuminating as only this preacher could make it. With such a general "frame of reference" provided, we could clearly see, I imagine, why Spenser's "fluidity" fails to hold opposing tendencies together; how a puritan "sin-morality" refrigerates one partial fusion in "the frozen labyrinth" of Milton—though what "labyrinth" means here is left to mystical speculation; and how Swift "tilts the balance" in the opposite direction from Milton's by weighting it with physical obsessions. If hard pressed, we might be seduced into granting that the "vital flame" of holism burns, however dimly, in the platitudes of the *Essay on Man*. At least, I suppose that we should see all this if only we were provided with a "frame of reference." Without it, unhappily, five of the essays strain to refer themselves to something which is definitely localized nowhere.

There is more good stuff in this book than in half-a-dozen of the usual works of criticism and interpretation. It bravely attacks the problems of artistic creation "on a wide front"; it sparkles with ideas; most of the pages are sown with exciting revelations of poetic craftsmanship. And the minor infuriations which boil up in a reader as he goes along are often forgiven finally as being

a sort of artistic counter-irritant. In this, as in all of his books, Mr Knight dashes to work with an uninhibited zest that most writers on literature are too tepid to feel or too cowardly to admit. It is exhilarating to watch him hurdle rules of grammar and findings of historical research as blithely as Henry Ward Beecher ever took the one obstacle or Mr Henry Ford the other. All the more pity, I repeat, that the book as a whole falls short of "Shakespearian integrity."

I am bound to confess that the chapter on Byron defeats me almost utterly: it is all too aptly named "The Two Eternities." It could, with great advantage, be reduced to half its present length—it takes up nearly one-third of the book—and the space saved might be devoted to the missing chapter on "The Holistic Conception of Art." No doubt *Marino Faliero* and *Sardanapalus* are not much read nowadays. But thirty-six pages of withering abstract are enough to extinguish any oracle that ever burned. And to read that "in the eight hundred double-column pages of [Byron's] stupendous output . . . there is scarcely one really weak line" is to feel dubious about the validity of some of Mr Knight's enthusiasms.

LATIN LOVE POETRY[1]

W. D. Woodhead

The very form in which these two volumes have been produced is an indication of their difference of content: the first neat and attractive, as though a tribute by the publisher himself to a poet who would have appreciated such things; the second more matter-of-fact and austere, as befits a work of erudition composed for the professional scholar. Each writer has done his work admirably,[2] but the purposes with which the two books were written are so different that to compare them would be idle.

Professor Day's book is somewhat like that of a skilled detective. Imagine a stately edifice (the Pantheon of the Roman

[1] *The Lyric Genius of Catullus*, by E. A. Havelock [Professor of Latin, Victoria College, University of Toronto], Blackwell, Oxford, 8s. 6d.

The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy, by A. A. Day, Blackwell, Oxford, 7s. 6d.

[2] In Havelock's *Catullus* should not the first line of the fifth stanza on page 61 read: "Impossible to lay aside for ever"? In Day's book there are many typographical errors, mostly in the Greek (about ten on pages 45-6 alone), which should be corrected in a new edition.

Elegiac Love Poets), to which lead a number of confused footprints, some of them superimposed upon others in such a way as to make identification difficult even for the most patient investigator. Detectives have long been busy scrutinizing these tracks and have made some progress in their examination; but many of them claim to have discovered, dominating all other traces, the slot of Hellenistic Subjective Love-Elegy. Professor Day's investigations are thorough and, to the reviewer, conclusive. There are many elements which, either separately or collectively, influenced the Roman Love-Elegy: some influences may well be due to Greek sources which we no longer possess; but there is no evidence for the existence of a Hellenistic Subjective Love-Elegy. It is a ghost which must be exorcised, an ever-intruding and importunate ghost.

> Last night I saw upon the stair
> A little man who wasn't there:
> He wasn't there again to-day!
> Oh, how I wish he'd go away!

It is to be hoped that Professor Day has laid that little man forever.

Professor Havelock's book on Catullus should rest upon the shelves, or rather on the desk, of every lover of that poet. The work is divided into two parts: the first a series of "Imitations" of twenty-six selected poems, the second a penetrating and stimulating analysis of the poet's style and technique. The practice of "imitating" rather than translating, of "seeking to give people who do not know the original a sort of idea of the effect it produces on people who do,"[3] is nothing new. It was adopted by Edward FitzGerald in his *Rubaiyát* and his rendering of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon;* it may be seen in Dr Johnson's satires, *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes;* it is employed by Professor Garrod in the *Oxford Book of Latin Verse.* And Professor Havelock was wise to make use of this method instead of a faithful rendering which might have reproduced everything in Catullus except the one essential, his poetry.

The reader turns at once to see how he has treated certain famous lines, the magical couplet, for instance,

> Et quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox,
> Furtivos hominum vident amores,

and finds

[3] A. Platt, *Nine Essays*, p. 32.

The stars that make the sky
  Their nightly dwelling,
Twinkling while lovers sigh,
  But never telling.

Or again, there is the conclusion of the famous

Vivemus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,

where the author's imitation runs as follows:

Kiss me and kiss again,
  Nor spare thy kisses.
Let thousand kisses rain
  A thousand blisses.
Then, when ten thousand more
  Their strength have wasted,
Let's wipe out all the score
  Of what we've tasted:
Lest we should count our bliss
  To our undoing,
Or others grudge the kiss
  On kiss accruing.

These renderings are admirable: and one is thankful to find the poems of Catullus presented in their English dress by one who is himself a true poet.

In the history of poetry Catullus presents a strange and arresting figure. It is a long step from the preciosity of the *Peleus and Thetis* or the *Coma Berenices* to the clarity and charm of the lighter trifles, the tenderness of the Acme and Septimius poem, the consuming passion of some of the lyrics addressed to Lesbia, the light, bantering humour with which he writes to his friends, the startling obscenity with which he attacks his enemies. In that one slender volume of a little over one hundred poems is to be found an astonishing variety, and the task of analysing the style and poetic gifts of Catullus is one of unusual difficulty. One of our own Elizabethans, who produced a sonnet-sequence of studied artificiality, lays down the true principle when he exclaims: "'Fool,' said my Muse, . . . 'look in thy heart, and write.'" This is exactly what Catullus did. Professor Havelock is right in insisting that it is as a pure lyric poet that Catullus must be judged. "The Roman mind," he writes, "preferred to let form master emotion completely." And it is, he observes, because Catullus did not follow the general Roman way that he stands apart from other Roman poets. He did not wear that *gravitas* which muffles the majority of Rome's great writers and impedes their freedom of

action. Nor on the other hand, sophisticated though he is, do we find in him that polished artificial brilliance which, in a writer like Ovid, tends to blind the reader to the poet's lack of true and sincere feeling.

In a brief review it is impossible to dwell upon more than a few of the many interesting and valuable contributions which Professor Havelock has made to the proper understanding of Catullus. Not the least of these is his careful attention to the metres in which the poet composed. By employing simple hendecasyllabic and iambic metres, in which "the conversational accent of Latin" can find its normal play, the poet can talk intimately to his reader instead of declaiming at him, as he is almost bound to do in the more stately hexameter form. Latin drops readily into the two former types, while it resists and relucts at the latter. This is, however, only one of many shrewd observations made by an author whose book reveals a poet's understanding and appreciation of Rome's greatest lyric poet.

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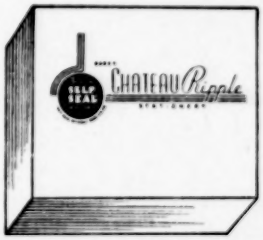

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